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Henry James

COUNTRY LANDLORDS.

BY

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“GLADYS OF HARLECH.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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COUNTRY LANDLORDS.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a blowing, blustering evening. The waves were lashing the rocks with wild and frantic energy. The hissing spray was rearing its crested head and assuming a thousand fanciful forms, ever and anon disappearing here and there through the fissures of the gigantic cliffs, overhanging a broad extent of sands at a secluded spot on the dangerous coast of Wales. At some distance over the hill, the smoke was rising from a village which lay partly concealed among the oaks and firs, completely sheltered from the cold

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north wind by a crag which towered above it. A small creek ran inland, forming a natural harbour for a few trading vessels, which were floating there, perfectly secure from the agitated sea. The sun was setting behind dark and lowering clouds, while seagulls and other aquatic birds were shrieking and screaming their wild notes in search of shelter for the night.

At that moment, a man, who for the last half-hour had been sitting upon the beach, hastily rose, and wrapping his plaid around his shoulders, hurried away in the direction of the village, whistling, as he went along, a Scotch air.

Shortly afterwards, he halted before a house with a whitewashed front, having ivy running up the gables to the top till it reached above the chimney, almost concealing it from the eye, with its bright glossy green foliage. Over the door hung a board, on which was painted the figure of a warrior in armour. This sign was a miserable daub—

painfully miserable, under which a few rough characters were carved, revealing the name and date of the last of the Welsh princes, Llewelyn ap Griffydd, by which name the picturesque inn was universally known.

“I am afraid indeed, sir, you will not think well of the place. I never see such weather in summer come like this before ; rain, rain, and storm every day. I am sorry,” said the landlady, addressing the stranger in a strong Welsh accent. Courtesying at the same time, she relieved her guest of his plaid and cap, and conducted him immediately afterwards into the low but roomy kitchen—a kitchen unlike any the Scotchman had before seen. With a quiet speculative scrutiny, and a shade of curiosity over all, his eyes wandered from one object to another ; nothing escaped him. The high mantel-shelf, with its rows of great and small brass candlesticks, sea-birds’ eggs, feathers, foreign shells, and a

curious variety of tin pots and pans, fantastically arranged, were the first objects to come under his investigation. Passing to the right-hand corner of the kitchen, there was a fixture in the shape of a triangular cupboard, containing old china and glass, evidently intended for ornament, or to be used only upon particular occasions. Then came a dresser with rows of gaudy-coloured plates and dishes; while hanging at the edge of each shelf were pewter pots, and blue and pink china mugs, which at a first glance might have been taken for rows of shells or birds' eggs. In fact, this original piece of furniture and its appurtenances appeared to have been placed in ambitious rivalry of the mantelpiece, both as to variety and exact order. Opposite the fireplace stood two clocks; one in a handsome dark oak carved case, disclosing at the first glance that it boasted of considerable antiquity, and without doubt was a valuable heirloom. The other clock was of a more modern date, but

had neither beauty, antiquity, nor anything else to recommend it, save that it was a wedding-gift. In the immediate vicinity of the clocks, suspended upon the wall, were two or three sets of polished steel fire-irons, toasting-forks, cheese-pressers, and glass rolling-pins, striped and mottled to resemble marble. Next in succession hung a copper warming-pan, shining like burnished gold. A prussian-blue umbrella, an indispensable article of domestic comfort to the peasantry of Wales, found here a prominent peg, assigned for its special use. Several pairs of boots and shoes, polished as bright as the pots and pans, were honoured enough to find a place upon the ceiling amongst the numberless pieces of bacon, dried salmon, geese, and herrings, forming a singular contrast, and running the chance of a collision with the heads of strange visitors who might happen to be a little above the ordinary stature. Last of all, a dark oak settle, with a high back, stood close to the

fire at right angles to the chimney-corner. It was the pride of the kitchen, and looked as if it had more elbow-grease bestowed upon it than any other article of the cottage furniture. Broad and long, it monopolized a considerable portion of the apartment. No one, however, who frequented the "Llewelyn ap Griffydd," would have dared to make an assertion of its superfluous room. It would have been considered a positive desecration, so much was that old oak settle appreciated and revered.

At the moment to which allusion is made, it was occupied by two men and an overgrown youth. They were composedly smoking their pipes, and sipping *cwrw da*.* Aloof from them, and on the opposite side of the fireplace, there sat, also smoking, a young man of a gentlemanlike appearance.

On the first entrance of the stranger, the two men and the lad rose, and having sa-

* Good ale.

luted him with a quaint nod, resumed their seats.

“ You cold, you come by the fire ? ” said the pretty, goodnatureed-looking hostess, fetching a chair from a remote corner, and placing it opposite to the lambent turf-fire. “ Sit you down, mister ; you soon get warm before the supper be ready. ”

Truer words were seldom spoken ; for scarcely had the Scotchman sat five minutes before the pyramid of burning turf, when he was compelled, from the heat which it emitted, to draw his chair off to a considerable distance, or he would have stood a chance of terminating his existence in the same manner as a fatted ox had been doomed to do that morning.

In reference to the ox, the important fact must be stated, in the way of explanation, that Mr. Owen Herbert Gwynne, the great landed proprietor in those parts, had arrived on the previous evening at Bleddyn, the family seat, after a few years' absence from

the country. To celebrate this event, an ox had been roasted whole, and a dinner given to the tenantry.

Mr. M'Farlane, for that was the Scotchman's name, sat for some time watching the flickering flames, before he ventured to cast a few furtive glances towards his companions, who were lounging in profound silence; and he became more interested in them, as he found opportunity to examine them separately.

The young gentleman to whom allusion has been before made, excited his curiosity not a little. He seemed out of place in being there at all, and yet he sat perfectly at his ease. He had a tall, muscular, and commanding figure. His clothes, remarkably well made, were rather uncommon in appearance. His eyes and complexion were dark, and the quick, intelligent expression of his features was remarkable. A single glance from his searching eyes embarrassed the Scotchman, who turned his own to the

opposite side, where the lad, who might be about sixteen, was playing with the dog and cat. The man who sat nearest him was a red-haired, weather-beaten looking sailor, with a high forehead, much of the man-of-war's man in his bluff address, apparently cunning and active, but not altogether bearing an ill countenance. His companion was nearly asleep in the corner, and looked neither like a countryman, a sailor, nor a gentleman, but seemed belonging to a species of his own. A short-cropped head, thick and bristly hair, a long nose, and slanting eyes, scarcely visible beneath his shaggy brow; a velveteen coat, shorts, and gaiters, with huge boots, the latter alarming in their size, completed his original appearance.

Mr. M'Farlane had hardly time to make a general survey of the whole party, before they were disturbed by approaching footsteps in the passage; and in a few minutes, Hugh Lloyd, the master of the inn,

accompanied by three male companions, entered the kitchen.

“ Indeed, truth, I be not sorry to have a roof over my head, and a fire to sit by, such a night as this,” exclaimed the landlord, wiping the streaming rain off his face, and looking round the cheerful and comfortable kitchen. With a respectful bow, he saluted the young gentleman “ foreigner.” It was by that name he was known in the country.

“ I see, very good sir, you no got under weigh this morning : ’pon my word, you get luck. The water is playing the deuce with the boats down yonder. I am sure it will make a damage before the morning.”

“ Yes, no doubt, we should have caught it on the bar ; but my cutter is used to hard work in the Bay of Biscay ; she is a tough little thing.”

The landlady at that instant approached, and with a concerned expression drew her husband aside. A slight altercation followed in their vernacular tongue, which

neither the stranger nor the Scotchman could understand, but by their gestures they guessed the new-comers were the cause. In a moment afterwards the host returned to the fireside.

“ I very sorry, Captain, very sorry ; my missus is very unhappy, she can't make things go right. The fire won't burn in the other room ; the smoke comes down, and the rain has made a great mess : will you take your supper with us to-night ? I no like to ask you, Captain, but there is no help for it.”

“ Make no apology, Hugh Lloyd ; a young man should see life in all its phases. It won't do me any harm—your supper will be just as good upon this table, as in the other room. Tell your little wife not to distress herself ; I am very comfortable here.”

“ You very good, sir, you no make any trouble never, but I very sorry I bring these men ; my missus say that make it worse.”

“ All's right,” said the Captain, with a

good-humoured smile ; “ pray compose yourself, my good man ; the more the merrier, they say.”

A slight bustle and confusion followed. A girl with blooming cheeks, wearing a striped linsey-woolsey petticoat, and a loose blue bedgown fastened round the waist by the strings of her apron, looking neither very clean nor tidy, was hurrying backwards and forwards from the scullery to the kitchen. The red-haired sailor, who seemed to hold the young gentleman in great respect, spoke repeatedly to the lad to keep quiet ; but, heedless of the reprimand, he set the dog afresh at the cat, and made more noise in his excitement than either of the combatants.

“ You provoking rascal, why do you not attend to your friend there ? ” exclaimed the young foreigner, at last interfering.

The boy looked up in awe ; but in a few minutes afterwards it was too tempting, and again he began teasing the cat. This time

the man in the corner with the great boots roused himself, and aiming a blow at the boy's head, sent him whirling nearly into the fire, saying at the same time—

“Take that! Why don't you put the dog down, the snarling brute, and leave the cat alone? Can't you let a man sleep in peace, without making all this thunder and lightning? I might as well be up in the hills sleeping between two waterfalls. You can't make much more noise.”

Happily for all parties, the savoury fumes from the supper, which was now placed on the table, soon restored the household to good humour. They took their places in silence.

“The good dinner at the Plas to-day has no made me feel less ready for my supper,” remarked one of the guests, smiling complacently at his well-filled plate, and taking upon his fork a swinging slice of bacon, and a whole potato not half uncased from its jacket, all of which he crammed into his

mouth, his eyes nearly disappearing while the process of mastication took place. He was a fat little man, with a hooked nose, and a remarkable round head, partly bald; two tufts of hair, provokingly bristling and obstinate, stood out on each side; forming a most ludicrous biped-like face.

The youth, who was sitting opposite, happened at the critical moment to fix his eyes upon the extended visage of this person, and discovering in it a remarkable resemblance to the bird of wisdom swallowing a mouse, his gravity was completely upset. Losing all control over himself, he shrieked with laughter, causing the glasses upon the table to vibrate. The sharp lad, with presence of mind, concealed the real cause of his merriment, by cleverly turning it off to the cat, that had opportunely clawed the dog's ears with her ever-ready pat.

“ I feared, upon my word, you will think us rough animals here, Mr. Scotchman,” said Hugh, apologetically. Then giving

the Captain a significant nod, he continued —“ But you see, mister, it will take time— ay, indeed, truth it will, take time, before you can feel home-like with us. You were never in Wales before, were you, mister?”

“ No, nor never saw a Welshman till I came here.”

“ Well, then, if a man comes to our country, and none of us says ‘come,’ he must learn to carry a wet jacket on his shoulder, and take patience till the weather give the sun to dry it. You, perhaps, no understand me, Mr. Scotchman?”

“ Mr. M‘Farlane,” interposed the new agent, drily, “ that’s my name.”

“ Well, very good, Mr. M‘Farlane, if you like that better; I was only going to tell, if you lives here four weeks and a day, you will come sharp enough to find that out! Just now you see we come all strangers together—strangers always looks civil and pleasant in the face; but you shall know my mind before long. I always like to tell

everything I think to a man's face, not behind his back; and it is better that way, to be rough, than smooth-tongued: do you see?"

Mr. M'Farlane could not quite see the drift of this; he put down his knife and fork, and looked uneasy. Hugh, without noticing the action, turned his head to address his wife. A considerable alteration in the tone of his voice had taken place; vacillating between coaxing and sympathy, he continued—

“ Well, Molly bach, you always keep a smile in the face, whether we run aground or float smooth on the water. I am glad in my heart, my little woman, you can; I no can, I must feel the change, and I do feel it. You see, missus, the husband of Bleddyn has live now a long time with strangers; now I always see strangers make everything look ugly. I no see good come by them—never. Mr. Owen Herbert Gwynne, when the father was alive, all the people in the

country will tell you, Mr. Scotchman, was a fine young gentleman. He live here in the country quite contented, and no tell a bad word for anybody, and no want nobody to farm the land but his own countrymen. I tell the truth, he was different to what he is now; he go among those strangers, and come back here, and think his countrymen can't do nothing; and so you see he sends you here, Mr. Scotchman, to teach us farming. Farming, indeed! Don't we know enough of farming to fill our pans in the dairies, and our mills with flour? We know enough to keep our children's colour in their cheeks, and good teeth in their heads. We no want more, no. See the fire there, we have plenty of that; and look at my little missus, what lady would like to have a better dress than she wears? We no want more. Yn enw goodness! What is the use of making all this talk and botheration about farming?"

The landlord grew excited, and stopped

to wipe his brow. No one spoke during the interval, and nothing else was heard beside the clattering of knives and forks.

“ Somehow it is very odd,” he began again, “ I see the English always bring bad ; let them be high or low, it makes no difference. Now look you, when had we a murder in this country before those railway navvies came, kicking up their rows here, and knocking each other’s brains out there ? Do you see, it is quite true. And now we come back again to our landlord : who make the first change in him ? The bad man, that young Lord Morlif, who took Bryn-y-Coed that year—it was he who did it, and he make mischief all over the country. Dear, dear ! there was poor Mrs. Gwynne, his mother, breaking her heart about her son, seeing him do so many wrong things with that young lord. Ask any one in the place, and they will tell you, Owen Herbert was not like the same person after he come acquainted with that bad man. Here is

this great gentleman, the Captain of the Cambria, he knows more about it than any of us : he was in the country at that time, and saw a great deal of them—did you not, sir?"

"Oh yes, but there was not much friendship lost between us," replied the young sailor, rather cautiously; "you should not come to me for the character of either of those gentlemen. I think, Mr. M'Farlane, it is rather a chance shot your coming here; you will not have a pleasant post to occupy. An agent's life at any time is not an enviable one; but here a stranger, in a strange country, doubly enhances the unpleasantness of such an office. Without wishing to vilify the squire, I am afraid you will find you have a capricious master to deal with."

Mr. M'Farlane did not look at all pleased. After a long pause, the Captain turned to the hostess with the sudden determination of alarming and teasing her, as he had often done before.

“ Well, Mrs. Lloyd, with that bright smile of yours, are you pleased at having all these grand folks coming into the country? or is the smile only a mask to conceal the annoyance and uncomfortable feelings you have, at the thoughts of seeing your peaceful village disturbed by the host of parasites, beef-eaters, and retainers, swarming in the great house up there? Are you sure your heart does not sink into a well, when the idea crosses your mind, of those jack-anapes of footmen prying into your nooks and corners, spoiling your girls’ hearts by their jackdaw flummery, telling tales at the Plas, and then running about with little scented notes to the magistrates in the county, to bring you up for some trifling offence. All this, Mrs. Lloyd, won’t butter your bread, nor make the kettle boil with its jolly little chorus, as it has done for the last five years. What will you do then, when your tea and your good man’s grog

are shipwrecked together upon Owen Herbert Gwynne's broad acres?"

"I no like to hear you talk in that way, young gentleman. I think, indeed, you make a big trouble out of a little one; the husband of Bleddyn will come like the old father. Yet his mother was a good lady, and was very kind to me, and I no like to hear nobody say a bad word for the family; it is better when you can no tell good, to no tell nothing."

"To no tell nothing?" repeated her interlocutor, smiling; "well, I am very sorry, Mrs. Lloyd, I can no tell nothing that you approve of; but you must look upon it in this light—I am acting a most charitable part in warning you of the coming calamities. It is always as well to be prepared for these things. You may depend upon it, there is a fearful change about to befall this quiet little hamlet. There is every chance of your good man being committed for having housed and aided the poachers: that's one thing.

Then you must recollect you have had your finishing feast upon hares and pheasants : no more dainty bits for your babies. Last of all, this comfortable inn, with its comfortable kitchen, will, if it is not closed up, wear a very different aspect ; you will not have one quarter of your customers. For instance, our friend here," he continued, pointing to the man with the cropped hair and great boots, " I should say his visits will be few and far between."

" You tell so many fine words, sir, I no can understand you : I no can see the ugly change you tell will come."

" You no can understand me, you no can see the ugly change I tell you will come !" laughed the young sailor, mimicking her strong Welsh accent in the most good-humoured manner possible. " Well, well, we had better say no more about it : I forgot we were in the presence of this gentleman, this distinguished proficient in farming, Mr. Gwynne's new steward, who looks, I beg

your pardon, sir, as if you thought you were among thieves, and were plotting to get them a berth in the county gaol. Allow me to give you a friendly hint not to meddle with the inhabitants of this village. Whenever I have come into this part of the country, they have been my study: it won't do to trespass upon their privileges, nor to apply the rod; that will not answer: as I said before, you won't have a very enviable position in being the tool in the hand of a governor who is too indolent to consider his own interest and the people's welfare."

"The young gentleman says quite right," observed the man with the great boots. "You had better not come and trespass upon us, sir, or you will have what you won't like. We will dangle you up in shreds and patches upon the highest tree in the park for a scarecrow, or a target, which would perhaps be better. You had best be upon your guard, sir."

The young foreigner rose, lighted his

cigar, and went back to the chimney-corner. Scarcely had he left the table, when the red-haired sailor burst out into smothered fits of laughter, and many absurd and sharp remarks were passed from one to another in their own tongue, with which, once let loose, they did not spare the unfortunate Caledonian.

“ You tired sir ? ” suggested the landlady, seeing the turn affairs had taken ; and immediately fetching a light, she continued in her broken English, “ You would like to go to bed ; yes ? ”

The Scotchman looked weary and depressed, and hence was by no means sorry to avail himself of an opportunity of escaping from his boisterous companions.

“ Good night to you, Mr. Scotchman, ” cried one of the party, as he was about to leave the kitchen. “ Don’t you be beating us in your sleep, ” suggested another. “ And by no means be carried away by the idea that you have a class of willing Welshmen to manage your fine pieces of machinery in

the shape of implements for sowing and thrashing corn, and so forth. In the way you will set about it, you will never succeed, never," concluded the young sailor, as the Scotchman's footsteps sounded upon the stairs, and the party got up and prepared to leave the house.

"So that is Mr. Gwynne's new agent," said he a few minutes afterwards, addressing Hugh Lloyd, now the only person in the kitchen besides himself. "The very last man I should have selected. He is such a mean, hypocritical-looking fellow; shy, and not clever. I don't like the man's face. What could Owen Herbert have been thinking of to have introduced such a reptile here? How can he ever have the patience to sit and listen to him whining out his broad gibberish, and catching up his breath like a simple school-girl who has been told it was interesting to mince her sayings? Why, Lloyd, how is it you allowed the fellow to take up his quarters here? I should have thought,

with your boiling indignation at having an interloper, you would have shown him the door before you had said 'Good morning' to him."

"Well, sir, if I were to do what my heart tells me, he should not have had his head upon a pillow in my house; no, that's certain. But you see, young gentleman, I am not a free man, and so it is not possible to do always what one would like. My missus every day tells me I must learn to look civil and pleasant in the face to everybody, or we shall lose our customers. There are so many new public-houses in Angharad now. You know that, sir?"

"Yes, Lloyd, I am sorry to see it."

"It is not good, indeed, sir, to have too many."

"Beer—ay, you drink a monstrous quantity of beer in this country; it is a pity you cannot find something better to do."

The young sailor stretched himself at full length upon the settle, and began musing.

Hugh Lloyd walked about the kitchen in his usual fidgety manner. The rain was beating violently against the window-panes, and the wind, as it swept round the high gables, howled without intermission. It had a dreary sound, and that very dreariness recalled to Hugh Lloyd an event which had taken place a few years before.

“It was just such a night as this—yes, just such a night,” muttered Hugh, carried away by his own reflections and stopping suddenly before the settle, when he continued—

“I sorry Mr. Gwynne is not a good man. Do you remember when you were in the country before, sir, what trouble he brought upon the coast-guard’s daughter?”

The Captain took his cigar from his mouth, and shook the ashes from it. “Yes, Lloyd, it was a shameful affair; what has become of the poor girl?”

“Gone wrong in the head, sir, so they say; anyhow, they have put her in a mad-

house to keep her out of the way. That was a bad beginning for a young man coming into a fine property. Was it not, sir ? ”

“ Yes, I am afraid Gwynne will have to answer for much, when the day of reckoning comes.”

“ The people in the country talk a great deal about that when Owen Herbert left the country, and he and that young lord give lots of money to stop the people’s mouths; but it no make no difference. Nobody can keep the tongue quiet when a thing like that spread over the country. Pity, I always say, he make acquaintance with that bad man. I wish the English would keep away. We don’t want their faces here. I would rather be without their money, and no dirty tricks.”

“ You should not be so prejudiced against the English, Lloyd ; it is absurd ; why, there are good and bad everywhere. Were you to travel from one country to another, as I do, you would not have these narrow views. The volup-

tuous gentleman to whom you refer was a bad companion for Gwynne, no doubt, but it is no apology for his conduct; a man with upright and honourable feelings will keep himself straight, into whatever company he gets. There is no excuse for him; so do not you be cutting up the English in that fashion."

"But really, sir, we never have a man like that in the place before. He make no end of trouble in country," persisted Hugh, determined to stand his ground.

"Well, that may be, I am aware of it; but I have no wish to argue the point; I have something of more interest to talk to you about. The wind and weather did not keep me from leaving your coast this morning. I remained purposely to disclose a secret to you, Lloyd."

"A secret, sir? Good gracious, tell me a secret?"

"Why not, Lloyd? you are an honest

fellow, I know, and I can trust you—I am sure I can trust you.”

“Well, yes, indeed, Captain, I hope that.”

“Did you ever ask yourself the question, Lloyd, why this foreigner should be always coming upon your coast?”

“Yes, sir, sometimes; but it is no business of mine.”

“What do the people say about me? They look upon me as a suspicious character, a smuggler, or something of that sort; do they not?”

“Yes, sir, I hear some of the gentlemen say that,” replied Hugh in a more confidential tone; “but I tell everybody there is no truth in it; you are too great a gentleman.”

“Ah, yes, I am a fine, noble fellow, am I not, Lloyd? I look as if I were ready to kick the world before me like a football, and so I am. I have been my own master for years, and have been leading a vagabond life, but I am no smuggler; I neither

smuggle nor receive smuggled goods ; that's more than your gentlemen in this part of the country can say. I am not always at sea. Those who imagine me to be a smuggler, would find me often in the gay saloons of Paris, or elsewhere, donned in a different fashion to what I am here, pulling on my white kid gloves, with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief at my nose, and saying pretty things to the merry little French girls. But I am soon weary of that sort of thing. I like the salt water best, and my rough jacket, and cruising about this rocky coast. There is a charm about Wales."

"I see you are fond of this country, and I like you for it. Indeed, sir, me and my wife are always glad to see your face, and sorry when you go."

"It is kind of you to say so. I wonder, Lloyd, you have never guessed who I am ; can't you trace any resemblance in me to some one you must have seen in your lifetime ?"

“ No, indeed, sir, no ; you are a stranger from a strange land—we all know that, and can speak many languages ; but I never see nobody in this country with dark eyes and dark hair like yours.”

“ My voice, is not that like ?”

“ Dear anwył, sir ! what make you talk in this way ? What do you mean ?”

“ This letter will explain it to you ; go and read it if you can, and then tell me if you do not know something of me.”

Hugh took the letter to the light, and after conning it over for a considerable time, dashed it upon the table, and approached the young man in a state of great agitation, scarcely able to articulate.

“ Dear, dear sir, is it possible you are his son ? Well, I am glad ; it never come across me. This is good news, and my little wife will be as glad as me.”

Not able to express his feelings to the extent he wished, he seized hold of the young Captain by the hand and grasped it

with genuine warmth. “ Why, it was my father who help him out of the country, and my father who was born at the gate-house of the old Plas, and live all his life with the family.”

“ Yes, I know all that, Lloyd ; and for this reason, I have always come to your house, and am now desirous to make you a sort of agent of mine.”

“ An agent—make an agent of me ! No, no ; not possible, sir. I will do anything I can for you, but I no want money. I take too much interest in the family. Not any money for me—the son of an old servant, no.”

“ Lloyd, I never employ any one without payment for their services. I would not be under obligation to an emperor, much less to one in an humble sphere. You will only have to do your duty, Lloyd, and leave the rest to me. Money with me is no object. Come, you must not be so excited ; but listen to what I have to say. I was down at

Hafod this morning. The old man has been in possession of my secret for some time; but he thinks, with me, it is better to keep the matter quiet. As far as it goes now, all is right. He has promised to make me his heir; just what might be expected, for by birth I am entitled to the property. But my fear is, Lloyd, the old man may change his mind or be persuaded if he gets a large offer to sell the farm, and so do me out of it. I know Gwynne has long coveted that strip of land, and would go any length to purchase it. My object is to keep it out of his hands. Now I don't like the look of that Caledonian gentleman; he will perhaps find how matters stand there, and turn the old man round his fingers. This is what you must prevent. You must always be upon the look-out after my interest. Keep your eye upon that rascal. I want that property for several reasons. I want it, for one thing, to build upon the Clogwyn, where there is the finest view in the country, and

many capabilities. I have made up my mind, if I ever build a nest upon land, it will be upon the Clogwyn. So, Lloyd, you see what your office is: you must be my land pilot, while I am in foreign parts; and when you see sandbanks, squalls, or a shoal of sharks coming, you must give the alarm. That Scotchman must never be allowed to put his foot into that house. There is no telling what he may do, with those cunning eyes buried in his head, and those fingers never clean. Do you understand what you have to do?'

"Oh, yes, I see, sir; and I will indeed look after your interest in every way. Dear me! it would make me happy to have you living in the country. I am looking at you—I can't help it, sir, you must forgive me; I can't believe it is true."

"Oh, yes, look at me; you may look at me as much as you like, there is no mistake. I am really his son, though I am not like him. How is it this fact did not dawn"

upon you? Twenty times, at least, I have spoken to you of events that have taken place in this country, and have questioned you about many things, so that you might have imagined I had been living here all my life instead of being a foreigner. I often wondered you were not puzzled at my local knowledge."

"Well, indeed, sir, it was odd I no see before. Now you make it known to me, I see I have not been very sharp."

"No, Lloyd, you are not overburdened with sharpness, though you may be with honesty."

"Indeed, I am afraid not, sir; dear me, it was foolish of me, when I know all the while he gone to that far-off country from where you come. I forget now what is the name of the country—that place behind France."

"Behind France!" repeated the young sailor, with a ringing laugh; "why, Lloyd, my good fellow, when do you intend to set

about brushing the cobwebs from your intellect, so that you may acquire a little more sharpness, and learn to express your geographical knowledge, and how to speak English without making those infantine mistakes of 'no tell,' and 'no see,' in every other sentence? Your phraseology is remarkable." Again he laughed.

Hugh stroked his head and grinned, while the young Captain continued—

"I will tell you what, my good fellow, there is a dearth of knowledge in this country. There is too much night here; we must, by some means, import a little more daylight among these hills. If I come and live among you, I will make a change; but I shall not set to work in the way Mr. Gwynne and his tool, the Caledonian, do. No, I shall govern you without whip or spur; and you shall benefit by it without feeling it, or being ruffled or insulted by bringing a Scotchman to put you into leading strings to teach you farming. But,

Jupiter take it! this is random talk. I have not yet got the Clogwyn. Mind, Lloyd, whatever you do, keep your eye upon the old gentleman down yonder in the hollow. It all depends upon that; when that is secured to me, I will come and spend my gold among you." -

"Upon my word, sir, I wish I could understand all you say," ejaculated Hugh, looking at the young sailor with profound respect. "I see all the same time you are a great man. Yes, yes, my little missus tell that from the first day she see you come here. I think, indeed, my missus is more sharp than me; she is foolish in some little things, but can see far in great things! Yes, it is true, indeed, you are a great man, and what is better than all, though I can hardly believe it, you are a son of the old Plas. Nothing can make me more glad than to hear that."

"Well, Lloyd, the old clock there tells us it is getting late. I must be off in the

morning at sunrise, so good night. Go, and dream of the great man, and of the old Plas, looking as it did a hundred years ago, and—and—”

He took up his candle, and bounded up the stairs, rousing the whole house by another hearty laugh.

CHAPTER II.

THE library at Bleddyn was a gloomy room ; the window looked out upon black rocks that projected over the road leading to the back premises. They were partly covered with weeds and mosses, and water was constantly dripping from long tendons of rank creepers and ivy, which hung down from above. A large cistern stood near, on one side supplied with spring water by a pipe conveyed over the cliff, emptying itself from a great height, and splashing every mineral and vegetable production within its reach.

The monotony of increasing dripping of water ; the carved black oak furniture ; the antique chintz hangings, and old-fashioned portraits ranged high upon the wainscot ; the glass door opening upon the gravel walk, its passage choked with sickly flowers, evergreens, and overgrown vegetation,—all combined to give Mr. Gwynne's study a most dreary appearance. The bright glow of a fire might have cast a cheerfulness upon its dull walls, but it was summer-time and the grate stood empty, containing only a few crumpled letters.

Mr. Gwynne, with a light in his hand, opened the door and entered this still and sombre apartment. The family had retired to rest. He sat down to his table covered with papers, and remained some time leaning back in his chair, apparently much excited. Perhaps from custom or an overheated frame, the chillness which prevailed around did not inconvenience him. Mr. Gwynne was between thirty and forty years of age. He

could not be called a little man, yet his face seemed shrunk, and with a cadaverous complexion, there was nothing that could indicate a strong constitution. His character was composed of strange contradictions ; he was remarkably hospitable, yet he was covetous. He was bland and courteous in his manners, and yet there was a bluntness intermingled with his courteous carriage not easy to define. In society he was cheerful, even jovial ; but notwithstanding his facetious smile and his urbanity, to a scrutinizing observer there were certain lines in his countenance which indicated hollowness, and seemed to hint that he wished the world to think contrary to the fact, that he was a happy and contented man. Family pride, and family possessions, with an increasing love for the bottle, were his besetting sins.

After musing for a considerable time in his chair, he began muttering—

“ Williams’s farm ! The Hafod property !
An ornamental and eligible slip to hook on

to my broad acres, and it will keep out intrusion. It is what I have been longing for ever since the rent-rolls of Bleddyn have been put into my hands: and now thank God the old fellow cumpers the earth no more; gone at last!"

He rose to search for papers, then sank back in his chair and repeated—

"I am glad the old fellow is dead, gone at last! The property is sure to be sold, and I will purchase it. The Briscoes extinct, the Gwynnes will have the whole. A grand move! a grand move! What would my sire have given to see that come to pass?" As he finished the sentence, he rubbed his hands and grinned.

All the lights in the house save those upon the table before him were extinguished, yet the solitary master remained sitting there replenishing his glass with what appeared to be brown sherry or brandy. The hollow sound of the dripping water grew louder from the stillness of the night, but

he had become accustomed to the monotony, and found it rather composing than otherwise, or the brandy-and-water had something to do in making him feel more contented with himself than usual. He had no inclination to go to bed, but continued to be occupied with the decanters upon the salver till he became so stupified from the pressure upon his brain that he could scarcely articulate clearly what he still attempted to say—

“ Thank God, the old man is dead, gone at last !”

He rose from his chair after making several false essays, and with an unsteady gait he quitted his study for his chamber.

On the following morning, before the breakfast-bell had rung, Mr. Gwynne, a very unusual circumstance, was again sitting in the library occupied in writing a letter, and Mr. M'Farlane was announced.

“ What made you so late? I have been expecting you this last half-hour,” said he

in a nettled tone. "We shall lose this day's post from your confounded dilatoriness. When I state an hour, I expect you to be punctual to the moment; bear that in mind for the future."

With a short dry cough and a submissive air the Scotchman was about to venture an apology, but was immediately silenced by an impatient shake of the hand. Having finished and sealed the letter, Mr. Gwynne rang the bell and gave it to the footman. He then turned sharply to his agent.

"Now, M'Farlane, speak out, and spare your words. What have you ascertained concerning the farm? Is the property entailed? I am pretty sure it is not."

"No, sir, it is not entailed, but I am sorry to be obliged to communicate unacceptable news. This old man who is just dead, turns out to be a relative of that young foreigner who used to come upon the coast a few years ago, and went by the

name of Captain Ricardo Lewis. He has left him everything he possessed."

"Lewis! that fellow, confound his soul!" parenthesized the squire, starting up from his chair with a nervous contraction of the brow, and his thin lips disappearing between his teeth. "Jove take the fellow! there is no mistake then, he is a son of that vagabond spendthrift, and this is what brought him hovering about our coast, exciting everybody's curiosity. Now it all comes out."

Mr. Gwynne paused, walked to the window, and after remaining there for a few minutes, returned, and said, in a hurried and piqued tone:—

"Well, M'Farlane, it does not much matter; I can purchase the property from him, I suppose, as well as from any one else. I know the fellow: he will care more about gold than those acres; that wandering Jew won't settle anywhere, not he."

"I am afraid, sir, you will be disap-

pointed. Hugh Lloyd told me that the Captain will not part with the property on any consideration, that he is going to build a palace upon the Clogwyn."

"A palace on the Clogwyn—absurdity! and are you such a fool as to believe it, and is it still greater to repeat what that humbugging Methodist says?"

"I am afraid you will find the man is correct sir; the site has already been fixed upon, that extreme point which projects over the sea to the south."

It was impossible for Mr. Gwynne to conceal his annoyance. His lips were as livid as his face, anger and vexation were rankling within him. Striking his hand impetuously upon the table, he continued—

"That fellow, that fellow, to come here and plant himself among us! He, of all the sons of Adam, to stand in my way! I am lord and master here, we don't want his interference and moralising disputations. He had better keep away—ay, and he shall

keep away. We will lure the fellow by giving him a bait in the form of a bribe. Only let me have that property, and I reckon not what I sacrifice. Write, M'Farlane, at once to his lawyer. Do you hear?" He wrote on the margin of a paper he held in his hand and gave it to his agent — "Offer him that sum, and higher if necessary."

"Breakfast is ready, sir," said the footman, dashing the door open, and startling both master and agent by the suddenness of his appearance.

Mr. Gwynne searched for some papers, and having given a few more directions, obeyed the footman's summons, determined in his own mind, as he passed through the hall, that the property should be his.

The contrast was brilliant, coming from that gloomy, dreary apartment, into the pretty, cheerful morning parlour, with a lovely view of the mountains and sea from its windows, and a fountain playing upon

the lawn. There was, too, a profusion of roses and clematis creeping up the pillars of the veranda, which, with the apple-green curtains, and long pier glasses in neat white and gold frames, together with a choice collection of chalk drawings, rendered the whole elegant and striking in effect. There was much to attract and nothing to offend the eye; all was cheerful without being gaudy, and arranged with exquisite taste. A flower-stand full of choice and lovely exotics, rich in bloom, stood out in the room some yards from the great bay-window, attracting the general admiration of a merry group gathered round the breakfast-table. The rest of the party were standing near the open casement admiring the view, and talking over an excursion to a cromlech, and other Druidical remains that abound in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Gwynne conjured up a smile as he entered the room and greeted his guests with his usual cheerfulness. Amid all his

peculiarities of character, he possessed the art of making his friends feel welcome. All were at home in his liberty-hall, and experienced at their departure a regret deeper than was usual upon such occasions.

The old mansion was a charming country residence; there was a sort of dreamy romance hung about it, which made it particularly attractive to young people. It was situated in the midst of fine mountain scenery, and its extensive pleasure-grounds stretched to the sea-shore.

Whatever was wanting in Mr. Gwynne was amply supplied by his gentle wife, Lady Elizabeth, who possessed a highly cultivated and well-disciplined mind. In every sentiment there was a refinement and a purity which raised her above her associates, without causing any one to feel awed by her presence. She was easy of approach, and her amiability won all hearts. She was not handsome, yet her smile and fascinating manner gave that impression.

Some hours after breakfast, Mr. Gwynne

suddenly appeared before his wife with a riding-whip in his hand. He looked heated.

“ You ladies had better postpone your drive till the evening. It is intensely hot even in the shade. Those horses will never stand the heat, any more than the flies, if you attempt to take them out at this time of day.”

After chatting a few minutes with the young ladies, he stepped out of the window into the veranda, and as he did so, exclaimed—

“ Hollo ! you mischievous little dog, what brings you here ?” Clack went the whip upon something soft, and Mr. Gwynne disappeared down the gravel-walk. Lady Elizabeth approached the window.

“ It is you, my child ; I did not know you were in the room, or rather out of the room,” said she, as her eyes fell upon the slender form of her son, stretched across the window-sill, his head and shoulders entirely sheltered by a large myrtle which stood near in a colossal tub. “ What are you doing in that odd posture ?”

“ Only reading, mamma,” replied the boy, lifting his thoughtful face to hers.

“ The book must be very interesting to keep you quiet so long,” continued his mother, glancing over his shoulder at the absorbing volume. “ To judge from its appearance, it is neither a library nor a story book. Where did you get it, my child ?”

“ You will not be angry with me, I know you will not be angry with me, mamma,” cried the young heir, starting up with the soiled book clasped between his fingers. “ You must not mind about its looking dirty and torn. It is all about the Welsh hundreds of years ago. I like reading about them. Do not, pray, take it away from me.”

While his mother examined the book, which he placed in her hand with much reluctance, she remarked that it was a curious piece of antiquity, and turning over the pages, read aloud—“ ‘ Welsh Legends ; Wars upon the Marches ; the Mountain Bard.’

What can you find here to interest you, my dear ?”

“ I have been reading the history of the mountain bard, poor Iolo Goch, whom King Edward’s soldiers tried to murder, and they could not. What do you think the great bard did, mamma? He stood upon the rock and cursed them all for killing his brother bards, and was angry, very angry with them.”

“ How excited you are !”

She drew him to her and kissed his glowing cheek, and again asked him by what means the book came into his possession.

“ Mr. Maurice lent it to me.”

“ The antiquary, our rector’s father, you mean.”

“ Yes, mamma ; and he has promised to lend me more, and he is going to teach me Welsh. You said I might learn it. I want to learn it, that I may speak to the poor people.”

“ I have no objection to your learning the language, but I would rather you did not go so frequently to the Rectory. Your tutor complains to me that when you ought to be at your lessons, you are either at the Rectory, or scampering about the country and getting into all sorts of mischief. It is a sad account I hear of you, and not the first time I have had to speak to you about it.”

“ Oh! mamma! lessons are so stupid, and Mr. Gilford is so stupid; he does not like what I like.”

“ It is not to be supposed he would, my dear: a little boy must learn to like what his tutor likes.”

“ Oh! dear, I cannot do it, mamma,” cried the child, striking his foot impatiently upon the carpet; “ it would be quite as hard as not to love you—quite. Mr. Gilford is like a girl; he is frightened at riding upon a horse, or sailing in a boat, or running upon the edge of the rocks, and

goes to sleep when I am telling him about the Cambro-Britons !”

The last sentence was uttered in a despairing tone, and both hands disappeared in his hair. His mother could scarcely suppress a smile. At the same time she spoke seriously to him upon the importance of attending to his lessons; and that learning Welsh and the books Mr. Maurice lent him must be put aside, if it continued to give him such distaste for his studies.

A cloud passed over the child's face, and for some minutes he stood swallowing his grief.

“ I wish, mamma, Mr. Gilford was like Mr. Maurice; when he teaches me and speaks to me, he looks so happy and kind, and his eyes are so bright. I remember everything he tells me, while I forget all that my tutor keeps talking about. I hate many words; I hate my tutor, indeed I do, mamma. Will you send him away, and you

teach me? I am not happy now, not a bit happy."

On Lady Elizabeth telling him that his father would object to such an arrangement, he shook his shoulder and his eye kindled.

"Papa!" he interjected; "why, mamma, he does not care a bit about me."

"Anarawd!"*

"It is true, mamma, and you know I can't love papa a bit more than I do Mr. Gilford. Is he not always saying cruel, unkind words to you, and scolding the servants and making everybody unhappy? I never can love him, but hate him."

"Hush!"

His mother took him by the hand and led him out of the room.

That evening the carriage drove to the door, according to the arrangement made in the morning.

"You will have a glorious sunset from

* In Welsh the *w* is pronounced like *oo*.

the sands," observed Mr. Gwynne, who had stepped out of the dining-room to hand the ladies into the carriage. "I may join you presently."

"Oblige me, Herbert; lift Anarawd on the box. This carriage is so high," said his wife, in her usual gentle tone.

"What, is your pet still in long petticoats?" replied Mr. Gwynne, with a sarcastic expression playing round his nose and mouth; and turning to the footman, he continued in a taunting tone:

"Go round there, Thomas, and lift the infant on the box; and don't be rough with him—ha! ha!"

"I am not an infant," cried the boy, striking the footman in the face and eluding his hold. In an instant he sprang upon the box agile as a cat.

The paternal insult brought a deep colour into his face, and he knit his brow.

"Ha! ha! we have put his monkey

up," laughed Mr. Gwynne. The carriage drove off.

With a serious, anxious face, Lady Elizabeth leaned back and remained silent the greater part of the drive. She was dwelling upon the unhappy estrangement between father and son. It was a deep and secret grief to her, and would ever be so; noble-minded as her boy was, she felt that, on account of the father's unnatural conduct, he would be a continual care, and that a heavy responsibility rested upon her. In that she stood alone. Hitherto she had done all in her power for her child's good. After the malignant fever he had caught in London, the only surviving one out of three, her anxiety concerning his health had been great. She had yielded to the medical man's advice to let him ride and run about in the open air as much as possible. Thus in regaining his health he had acquired desultory habits, and now a new era in his

young life had commenced by the arrival of a tutor. He felt discipline and restriction a hardship. Unfortunately there was no cordiality between tutor and pupil, any more than between father and son. None understood the child's disposition but herself.

The moment they reached the beach, the boy was soon scampering over the wet sands and leaping over every puddle that came in his way, and shouting to the flocks of seagulls. The tears he had shed in the morning had left no trace upon his face. In the midst of his joy at having escaped from his tutor, even his father's insult for a time was forgotten. Happy pliancy of youthful temperament!

The mother stood for a moment watching his movements, and wondered how any one could have the heart to cast a cloud over the sunshine of early youth, that comes but once, and is soon gone, leaving memory crowded with regret that the past can return

no more. We grow selfish as we grow in years, and too rarely sympathize and participate in the joys of childhood. Happy childhood!—who would not be a child again?

CHAPTER III.

MONTHS glided into years, and two lustres have passed since we left our boy-hero amusing himself on the hard sands a mile distant from Bleddyn. Many events have since taken place, and are to be found in the records of the town of Angharad. These shall simply be touched upon in connection with the narrative, before proceeding further. Hafod is not yet in possession of the great landed proprietor who coveted its acres: gold had failed to gratify Mr. Gwynne's cupidity. Captain Lewis would enter into no negotiation, for these acres were of more value

to him than ten times the number in any other part of the Principality.

On Mr. Gwynne's return to his country-seat on the following summer, it was with secret mortification he saw the man he hated continue with a lavish hand to erect his home upon the Clogwyn (precipice). He was constantly in a state of irritation to hear Captain Lewis's praises among the inhabitants of his own town. The Captain was the encourager of industry and the promoter of knowledge, and the interest he took in the people was seen by his daily actions. These showed that he was not a man who lived without an aim in life. Mr. Gwynne was of the opposite character; he took no interest in anything but self-indulgence: he was a voluptuary. A little conscience-smitten, his malignant spirit was sharpened; it made him still more desirous to injure his rival.

“ Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach.”

As the structure rose under the hands of

the numerous workmen, many people were puzzled as to what order of architecture it might be classed under. It bore some resemblance to an Italian villa, except that it was much more massy and baronial-looking. The most striking portion of it was a magnificent terrace, jutting over the sea, with turrets at each end. It might be said, that without being of any architectural order, there was an elegant classical appearance about the entire edifice, which gratified the eye and pleased the fancy.

When the building was completed, the interior was fitted up with a taste and elegance proportionate to the exterior appearance. The grounds, too, were beautifully laid out. The spot had many capabilities, and none were thrown away. There was not so much display as harmony throughout; and this harmony Captain Lewis considered the acme of taste. Leading the life he had done in Spain, Italy, and other parts of the globe, he had had many opportunities of selecting

valuable pieces of furniture, curiosities, and pictures, on which he particularly prided himself: his collection he considered unique. The questions mooted in the neighbourhood were, Who was to be the mistress of this lovely home? Was he a married man? Would he bring home a foreign wife as dark and handsome as himself? His acquaintances were sure he would never live alone; he was too fond of domestic society. Though a reserved man, no one could be long in his company without feeling that he appreciated the fair sex, and was ready to uphold their rights. He was, then, sure to marry, if he were not already bound by Hymen's chains. All were mistaken; for, much to their surprise, after a six weeks' absence, he returned, accompanied by a little girl with fair hair, her governess, and a black nurse. He appeared to be devoted to this child. He was particular in not allowing her to associate with any of the families in the neighbourhood, excepting the Rector's; and even there she did not

often visit. Her education monopolized her time, and she was seldom seen but in company with her father, either on horseback, or occasionally in his yacht, which was the admiration and envy of all the gentlemen in the neighbourhood. Though he had parted with his ship, his yacht retained the name of the Cambria.

Another member of the household was a Mrs. Parry. On the death of the late proprietor of Hafod, this widow, a relative of the old man, was deprived of her home, and, it was supposed out of commiseration and charitable feelings, Captain Lewis offered her one at Clogwyn. Mrs. Parry was near fifty, with a good-tempered looking face,—an adept in housekeeping and a useful member in a large establishment, but nothing of a companion. She was extremely attentive and kind to Captain Lewis's little girl, much as a conscientious upper servant would be.

For the first few years, Gertrude, for that was the name of the fair-haired child, was

seldom in Mrs. Parry's company but during meals. When she was not with her governess, she was with her father. Captain Lewis found no fault with his isolated establishment. Gertrude was his companion when he wished for companionship, and he seemed to require no other—he seldom left home, and did not often visit in the neighbourhood. Every year the child seemed to become more and more essential to his happiness, and she seemed to reciprocate the same sentiment to an equal extent.

Ricardo Lewis having been nine years a resident at Clogwyn, Gertrude had now attained her seventeenth year. Her governess had left, and she was finishing her education with her father. He was bent upon giving her a classical education; for he said he could not see why women should not enjoy that advantage, and thus become more companionable, without destroying their feminine graces, for why should it? On this account, Gertrude, independent of her governess, had

always to say her lessons to him from their first settlement at Clogwyn. He felt great pleasure in teaching her and training her mind rightly, and rejoiced to find she responded entirely to his wishes. His great aim was to keep her from indulging in absurdities. Young ladies of the present day, he thought, too often trifled away their time, and fell short in their intellectual acquirements, instead of attending to that mental culture which would not only be an endless source of pleasure to themselves, but give a better tone to society at large.

One morning, as they were sitting in the library and Gertrude had just fetched her books, she looked up at her father, and kissing him affectionately, said—

“What makes you look so serious, dear papa? of what are you thinking?”

“That people seldom go through this world without meeting with many crosses.”

“Oh! pray don't talk about crosses,” said

she with her laughing eyes : “ as long as we live, we two, only we two in the world together, there can be none ; we must always feel as we do at present—happy, without a cloud.”

“ Without a cloud, Gertrude ! we should then have more than our share of happiness in this world. Suppose I were to tell you that in the dim vista I can descry one already ?”

“ No, no, dearest papa, don't frighten me. Your looks are more ominous than your words.”

“ Well, my darling, to speak faithfully, I have not had good news this morning ; that is what I mean.”

“ Not good news ?”

“ No ; I am apprehensive lest I should have to go to Australia.”

“ Australia, papa ! then I will go with you, and we shall still be happy.”

“ Impossible ! I could not take my little Gertrude into the rough world ; over the

tempestuous sea, too. You are safer here in this comfortable nest among these hills. If I go, I shall be compelled to leave you behind. I shall be absent a year."

"Never! you must not indeed leave me behind, my dear father. It would be great cruelty. A whole year! why it would seem to me a lifetime of misery, we who have lived entirely for each other's society. Think, dearest papa, how could we support such a separation?"

"It will be a hard struggle, but I fear, my child, it must be sustained. The world—the wide ocean, are far too rough for my gentle Gertrude to encounter."

"That is a weak, miserable excuse: you must know that I should not mind roughing anything, as long as I am with you. I cannot submit to this arrangement."

Captain Lewis shook his head. "Well, well," said he, checking a sigh, "let us hope the evil day may yet be put off, as it was last year. You may be sure, my darling, I shall

make a great effort against it. The separation will be harder for me than for you."

"No, no, dear papa," cried she, throwing her arms round his neck, "you could not grieve more than I should. You must let me accompany you : I will go with you."

"What a passionate little thing you are, Gertrude ! ever trying to hector or to govern me ; but I am as firm as a rock. From your childhood you have shown me obedience, and you will do so now. If I go, I shall go alone."

"What a mournful word that alone ! You cannot mean it ; really you must have cold blood in your veins to issue such an edict." She put her head upon his shoulder, and burst into tears.

"Gertrude, look at me."

"No, this is cruel, cruel treatment !"

"My darling, pray don't weep in this way, but listen to reason."

"No, reason cannot console me, so don't attempt to reason. Those who have a stone

for a heart may philosophize—I cannot. I thought you had more regard for my feelings, and that your love for me was deeper.”

“ You wrong me, my child. I act for your good : mine is unselfish love ; for were I to consult my own feelings, I would take you with me and spare myself this bitter trial, which, as I said before, will be harder for me than for you.”

“ You speak enigmatically, I don’t understand you ; it cannot surely be good for us to be separated : I shall be lost without you. Think—oh, think again of it, dear papa !”

“ I will think of it again and again, my little Gertrude ; but it will be in vain. You must not talk in this childish way. Place confidence in me, as you have hitherto done, and rest satisfied. I will cause you no more tears than I can help. Come, don’t undervalue my love : give me the kiss of peace, and let us hope this unwelcome voyage may, after all, not be necessary.”

“ I do indeed hope so ; but that heavy

sigh and grave look seem to say the hope you have is faint."

"I am only waiting to hear from my legal adviser; a letter from him will put me out of suspense. Should it end in my being obliged to leave you, I trust you will show more fortitude. To have my Gertrude sobbing in this way would make me fancy you were a child again, and had not all that amount of sound sense and that fund of knowledge which I know you to possess. At times you can look so womanly and dignified; how is it, then, Gertrude, you are so impulsive, so childlike in some things?"

"Because my love for you is intense, and this is the first time you have ever ill-treated me. Imagine my having no other companion than uninteresting Mrs. Parry, and not see your dear face nor hear your voice for a whole dreary year! With so dark a prospect before me, how can I have control over myself? Cry I must, if it is like a child. I shall pine into a skeleton before you return.

Surely, it is better to sacrifice money than peace ; do not go, even if you deem it necessary."

There was a pause. Captain Lewis remained inflexible. Again Gertrude continued,—

" You have spoiled me ; that is the truth : you have unsuited me for the society of any one but yourself. Everybody strikes me as insipid and ordinary after you. I cannot make new companions if I would, and in that case you must acknowledge it is doubly cruel of you to leave me. It is unlike you ; it is inconsistent with your nature, papa."

" Gertrude, don't cavil about it ; my position is an embarrassing one, much more than you are aware of than I can explain. I regret Mrs. Parry is not a more congenial companion ; but you must write to your governess, and ask her to come and keep you company during my absence. I should feel more comfortable did I know she was with you. You can visit at the Rectory :

I would rather you did not go anywhere else, for in the summer time there are many strange characters infesting these secluded districts ; so that I should be in constant alarm, were I to know there was a chance of your being thrown amongst them. As it is, I shall not leave you, my child, without a load of grief and anxiety ; and that dear little face which generally looks so happy and blithe, how I shall yearn to rest my eyes upon it again ! It is well you don't know what a bitter struggle it will cost me. But come, my little Gertrude," he said hurriedly ; " the fiat has not yet gone forth : hoping for good news, let us begin our lessons."

" Oh ! no, not any lessons to-day : I can't give my mind to anything now."

" We will go for a ride, then : it is foolish to sit here fretting ourselves about what may never come to pass."

Gertrude consented ; and Captain Lewis, with a look as if he were trying to shake off

forebodings, said, in as cheerful a voice as he could command—

“The weather looks fine now; I hope it will keep so. Here, child, put on this hat, and we will go to the stables ourselves and order the nags. Your Nanny was so wickedly inclined yesterday, she broke her manger, and has hurt her foot; you will be obliged to mount the black to-day.”

“I wish she were not so mischievous; it does not seem long since she maimed herself before. It is a bad habit she has acquired.”

“Just what I told David, who if he had had only his wits about him, this second accident might have been prevented. But it is impossible to make these fellows use their brains; they won't think for themselves; they are little better than automatons.”

On reaching the stable, Nanny's foot was examined, and their orders given. In half an hour afterwards the horses were at the door, and they mounted.

“In what direction shall we ride?” asked

Captain Lewis, as they left the Clogwyn gates. "The sands, I am afraid, will be soft after so much rain; suppose we take the Bleddyn road?"

"Yes, and return over the hill: it will make a pleasant round."

They continued this way for some little time, until the old mansion of Bleddyn, looking magnificent, and well sheltered by the rocks and trees above it, came in sight.

Gertrude expressed her admiration for the old place, and remarked how well it looked, and how strange it was that she had lived so many years in the country without having visited the spot.

"You know my reason for not allowing you to enter those grounds."

"On account of not being friends with Mr. Gwynne. He certainly has not behaved well to you. He appears to me to thwart you in everything, papa; I don't much like his appearance, he has such a two-sided face."

Captain Lewis laughed. "You are right there, Gertrude. Great man as he is, I have no desire for his friendship. I only wish he would not stand in the way of my benefiting the lower classes as he does. He will not come forward himself, and makes it his object to throw every impediment in the way of those who would help them."

As they approached nearer Bleddyn, they were surprised to see preparations going forward; shaking of carpets, cleaning of walks, and smoke from every chimney; for it was not the usual period the Gwynnes visited Wales.

"Lady Elizabeth may, perhaps, be expected," suggested Captain Lewis. "At this time of the year Gwynne could not leave town."

"I shall be glad to see her sweet, benevolent face again in the country. You know my admiration for her, and how I long to know her personally. I wish she were not married to Mr. Gwynne."

"Poor lady! she is far too good for him. A woman must have a brave heart to link

her fate with a Gwynne of Bleddyn, notorious as they are for being bad husbands."

"Bad husbands! that is news to me. Well, if they are ill-sorted, she does not show it in her face."

"You cannot always trace in the face what is at the heart. I should fear, poor lady, she has a worm feeding upon hers. Joined to that epicurean lord of the earth, she must lead a miserable life—no woman could be happy with that man."

"There can be no greater affliction on earth than for a woman to have a bad husband."

"*Vice versá*, a bad wife, my dear Gertrude."

"Certainly, a victimised man is equally an object of pity; but there are more bad husbands than wives, I should imagine."

"Perhaps so; but men, recollect, are thrown into greater temptations than women, and their passions are stronger."

"If their passions are stronger, God has endowed them with a more powerful intellect

than women, to control those passions; and, in that case, you should not bring it forward as an excuse."

"We all fall short in self-control, or neglect our duty. I don't mean exactly to excuse man's offences; but does not woman too often throw aside the influence she possesses over man? It is in her power to do a multitude of good acts, were she only to exert her influence aright."

"The influence she possesses over man?" repeated Gertrude, turning those eyes so full of life upon her father's face. "What influence have I now? Have you not turned a deaf ear to all my entreaties not to leave me behind?"

"Gertrude, woman is often ignorant of her power. But you have come back to the old grievance. Have I not already told you that in this particular I am necessitated to have my own way? For your sake, as well as my own, be satisfied. In other things, you must admit how much I am influenced by you."

“ No, papa, I feel only your influence. What should I have been, had I had no other companion than talkative Mrs. Parry? How truly thankful I am that I have been brought up in that charming home with you, dear papa! Oh! do not now destroy the happy spell: it can never, when once broken, be renewed. For my sake, do not leave me.”

“ Gertrude, you torture me.”

“ Don't say so, papa.” Her eyes swam in tears. And they dropped into silence as they gradually ascended the hill. An hour later, when they reached home, much to their surprise, their lawyer, Mr. Tilt, met them in the hall. Captain Lewis's face changed colour as they walked into the library together, followed by Gertrude.

“ Well, Lewis!” said Mr. Tilt, in a calm, business-like manner, “ I found I could not do without seeing you; so here I am, blue bag and all, ready to go through a

day's work, and off by the night-train to London."

"I hope, Mr. Tilt, papa is not obliged to go to Australia?" said Gertrude, in an agony of apprehension.

"I am sorry to say, it cannot be avoided, young lady; his presence there is absolutely necessary."

Gertrude walked mechanically out of the room, and sought her own chamber with so great an oppression at her heart that she could hardly breathe.

On the following evening she was sitting on her father's knee, and he was talking to her in a kind, consolatory tone.

"You see we must submit. Strive, my darling, to be calm." He stroked her cheek and kissed her affectionately.

"Don't talk of being calm; it only aggravates me more. How is it possible we can either of us be calm with the prospect of being separated for all these months?"

The Captain looked pale and thoughtful,

but volunteered no reply. He felt her slender arms round his neck; he felt the beating of her temples as her head lay upon his shoulder, and knew her heart was as sad as his own. He thought of the wide space of water between him and the distant land; he thought, too, of the dreary year that would sluggishly run out its days before he would again clasp his treasure to his heart. Gertrude was right: how could they be calm? There was something more required than human philosophy to support the heavy trial. A slight shudder passed over his frame, and his lips again rested on his child's cheek, that was glistening with tears.

This was Gertrude's first trial, and with it the struggles of her life commenced.

CHAPTER IV.

A WEEK or more has passed since Captain Lewis went off on his wearisome voyage ; and Gertrude, from her appearance, has not regained her spirits. Most of her mornings were spent alone in the library. Mrs. Parry fretted herself about her young charge, and sought every means to rouse or divert her from dwelling so constantly upon her loss, but soon discovered her own incapacity for the office, and came to the conclusion that Miss Lewis would never make a sociable companion, because her father had spoiled her. She had repeatedly told the Captain so,

and had warned him that he would some day regret it. She could not, therefore, blame Gertrude if she were different from other young ladies. It was not her fault, but that of her father. She pitied the girl, as she pitied all spoiled children, who had a great portion of bitterness entailed upon them by the folly and misguidance of the parents.

Making these allowances for her young companion, Mrs. Parry was ready to overlook Gertrude's many little failings, and bore her haughtiness and reserved manner with surprising serenity and good temper. Unfortunately, Mrs. Parry had no discernment to enable her to distinguish what it was that made her so objectionable to her youthful charge; and Gertrude, with her spirit and disposition, had much to endure from that over good-nature and fussy interference habitual to Mrs. Parry, as well as the ceaseless rattle of her tongue. It was annoying and wearisome to sit and listen to a harsh voice that neither conveyed amuse-

ment nor sense. It is no marvel, therefore, that Gertrude preferred solitude ; locking up her heart, and showing impatience to escape after meals into the library.

One morning, when she entered that apartment, which was to her indeed a sanctum sanctorum, she closed the door, inwardly rejoicing to shut herself out from the voices of the household.

“ To be alone, quite alone—I am much happier,” said she to herself, taking up a book and approaching the window. “ Books are better companions than uncongenial spirits ; they never fret me — they never oppose me, nor convey unpleasant vibration to the ear. I can sit here, too, and think of dear papa.”

She paused and turned over the leaves of her book, but did not appear as if she were altogether satisfied with herself, or with the conclusion to which she had come.

“ I am miserably weak,” continued she, “ and very selfish ; there is something alto-

gether wrong about me. How is it I can admire nobleness of character, and appreciate the good I see in others, and am not strong in those virtues myself? With such an example as I have had in dear papa, I ought to be different; and after all the unsparing pains he has taken with me, I ought to have profited more. You are deceived in your Gertrude, papa—sadly deceived! I am nothing but a poor, weak, discontented, selfish thing. The first moment a cross comes, I am crushed; and thus it is, I feel, too truly, I make more miseries for myself. I keep repining, instead of employing myself usefully; and murmuring because he would not let me go with him. Then I ask the question a hundred times, ‘Why would he not?’ His objection to my roughing the world was not the only reason. There was something much more serious than that, which made him so unyielding to my entreaties; he never acted so before. He must know how little are all the luxu-

ries and enjoyments of life to me without him ; and that to share a dry crust in an attic with him, I should have been more contented, and far happier !”

The door at that instant softly opened, and Gertrude caught the sound of the negress’s stealthy footstep approaching.

“ Well, Yarico,” said she, without turning her head, “ are you coming to see if I am happier to-day ? Were the truth to be told, I am more miserable than ever.”

“ Yarico is sorry to see no joy in her missus’s face ; but missus is neber happy when massa go away for a day, or for an hour. Yarico see it always so, and is sorry.”

“ Ah ! yes, Yarico, and now he is gone for so long. Sometimes I feel the strings of my heart will break.”

The negress shook her head mournfully. “ Not good ; no, no ; missus must remember a long time, like a short time, soon go : massa come again in the spring with the cuckoo and the swallow. Yarico pray ebery night to the

Great Spirit to bring missus what she want, and make her happy while massa away."

"Thank you, Yarico ; but I am afraid I want a great deal to make up for my loss, and perhaps I am not deserving."

"Yarico come to ask missus to go out. Shall Yarico bring her dings?"

Gertrude, with an indolent shrug, seemed to object.

"Not good to be in the house all day. Yes, yes, you will go for a walk, and drink de fresh air."

The negress moved towards the door as she spoke, to go and fetch her mistress's things."

"No, I think not, Yarico ; I would rather sit here with my book. I am sadly idle, and have no heart for anything."

The negress was disappointed, but was resolved to make another effort.

"Missus dear look pale. Yarico neber see her look so pale before ; a walk on the

hills will bring back de color. Missus will go, say yes ?”

“ Well, Yarico, I ought to oblige you, so good and forbearing as you are to me. If you wish it, I will go ; only don't say anything to Mrs. Parry : I wish to walk alone.”

It was not long before Gertrude was ready to start. Opening the coloured glass door which led into the shrubbery, she quickly disappeared.

Beautiful and picturesque walks abounded in the neighbourhood of Clogwyn ; and Gertrude, in a solitary mood, sought the most retired path. This led over the Hafod sheep-walk, a tract of land almost destitute of cultivation, consisting chiefly of rocks, heath, fern, hazels, and stunted oaks. The air was so pleasant, that, regardless of the time, she strolled further than she had ever before ventured—as far as the great boundary wall which divided the properties of Bleddyn and Hafod.

The evening was delightful ; the sun, too,

lighting up the valley below, spread a rich glow over the landscape. For some time Gertrude stood upon the ledge of the rocks, drinking in the delicious sea and mountain air.

“What a lovely view there must be on the other side of the wall!” she said to herself, as she remained gazing wistfully at the barrier which separated her from the forbidden ground.

The wall was high, and formed of large unmortared stones, not easy to scale; yet she resolved to attempt it. Light and agile, she soon reached the top, astonished with what ease the difficulty had been overcome.

During the excitement of the moment—her own strange position, with the magnificent view suddenly bursting upon her—the loose stones gave way under her feet, and she lost her balance. In vain she stretched out her hands to catch hold of a bough which was hanging over her head. Uttering a cry of terror, she was impelled forward,

and the next instant was prostrate on Mr. Gwynne's land. She remained for some time in a half-fainting state, unable to rise or move: from the intense pain she endured, she was convinced that she had either broken or dislocated her ankle. At first she was too distracted with pain to be aware of her forlorn and distressing situation.

The rays of the setting sun reminded her, at last, that the day was on the wane, and that she was helpless several miles from home. Then the truth flashed across her mind. The mural barrier stood before her; on the slope further on was a thick wood and a precipice; she seemed shut out from the world. The injury she had sustained prevented her from moving, so that any attempt to reach home would be in vain, and no one would seek for her in that desolate spot. No one from Clogwyn would suppose she had taken that route, and thus she would probably have to remain there the whole night. The thought alarmed her. She

wished again and again she had never attempted scaling the wall. Were she only on the other side, she might with a great effort crawl to the edge of the cliff, and call till some one heard her. But here shut out upon a crag, enclosed on all sides by wood, there was no hope of assistance, or of being heard if she did raise her voice and cry for help. Her case appeared indeed hopeless, and she could not refrain from shedding tears.

The valley looked gorgeous, as if in mockery to her misery: a flood of light burst from the clouds, and was again reflected on the opposite hills. All was smiling and happy, while she was in fear and torture, regardless of the lovely scene before her. At intervals she gazed despairingly around upon the dreamy landscape, stretching far and wide to the ocean horizon; but it only reminded her that the day was declining, and that there was no chance of deliverance for the night. Pondering upon her position

in the woods alone, her alarm momentarily increased. She called aloud for assistance again and again. The only reply was a faint echo from the distant hills. She listened, then repeated the call in hopes a mountain peasant or a shepherd returning to his home might hear her. Each time she ceased, she sat and listened. It was hoping against hope. Once more she burst into tears, and relapsed into silence.

On a sudden she was roused by a rustling among the dead leaves in the coppice, a short distance from where she sat. Her heart beat ; turning her head at the instant, a black retriever leaped over a ridge, and came bounding towards her with a low growl. Gertrude was too delighted to behold the harbinger of relief approach to be alarmed or to care at the unfriendly greeting of the animal. She could only feel that her deliverance from peril was at hand, and rejoiced in the anticipation. Dreading lest the passenger, whoever he might be, should con-

tinue on his way without following the dog to that secluded spot, she once more called for help ; then she tried to make friends with the animal, but in vain : he continued to growl and prowl, around her, as if he hardly knew whether to be pleased or not at her attempt to caress him. While thus occupied, a crackling of the boughs was heard, and a tall young man, with a fishing-rod in his hand, suddenly stood before her. He was startled and confused when he beheld Gertrude prostrated upon the sod in that wilderness.

As he approached and endeavoured to shake off his embarrassment, he said something about not being mistaken ; he thought he had heard a voice of distress, and hoped there was nothing serious the matter.

Gertrude immediately told the stranger how she had met with the accident ; that she could not put her foot to the ground, and was in great pain. But her greatest concern had been lest she should be compelled to

pass the night alone in that dark wood on the dangerous precipice.

“ This is, indeed, a strange wild place to meet a young lady ; and I am glad I have arrived in time to prevent so unpleasant a circumstance. I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Miss Lewis ?” said Anarawd, for it was the young heir of Bleddyn who addressed her. After a pause he added, “ I am sorry to see you suffering. Can I assist you or ease you in any way ?”

Gertrude’s face was flushed. “ I can scarcely bear the pain ; how shall I ever get home ?”

“ If you cannot put your foot to the ground, I am afraid you must submit to my carrying you. It will be over a rough path, and I fear in descending you will suffer still greater pain ; but I will do my best.”

“ You cannot carry me, it is impossible. Is there no means of letting them know at home where I am, and what has happened ? They would come for me.”

“ It is too late to seek a messenger : besides, I could not leave you here alone. Allow me to carry you ; pray don't hesitate.”

Gertrude did hesitate, and a dialogue of fears and assurances passed between them before Anarawd prevailed upon her to accept his offer.

Anarawd could not but feel interested in Gertrude, who had fallen so singularly under his special protection. He was anxious to alleviate her sufferings, and in the most delicate and gentle manner he raised her from the ground, took her in his arms, and, with a firm step, commenced descending the rugged path which would conduct them into the Bleddyn drive, from whence, he assured her, there would be little difficulty in sending for the Clogwyn carriage.

Scarcely had they set out, when Gertrude cried with pain, and Anarawd had to stop repeatedly in the descent ; for, with all his care, he could not prevent some jolting over the rough ground. Just as they reached

the drive, and he was in the act of securing an eligible spot on which to place his burden, Gertrude fainted. Her companion was much alarmed. Hardly knowing what course to pursue, he dipped his handkerchief into a stream that was running by the roadside, and laid it across her temples; but it was some time before she came to herself or was able to articulate.

It was now nearly dark, and not an individual was to be descried in any direction. The young man's uneasiness increased, and he began to feel more and more the awkwardness of his situation. To leave his companion in that helpless state was out of the question; and yet how was the Clogwyn carriage to be had unless he quitted her? While in this dilemma, he caught the sound of wheels in the distance—

“Here comes my mother's carriage; I am not mistaken!” he exclaimed. “Keep up your spirits, Miss Lewis, a little longer. I sincerely rejoice there is a chance of get-”

ting you safely home. I am sorry to see you suffering so much pain."

"Oh, never mind the pain now; I am so thankful to be out of the wood. I cannot express, Mr. Gwynne, how deeply I feel indebted to you. To have been in that dark wood near that precipice all night, would have been frightfully alarming. I shudder when I think of it."

"Indeed, I am delighted that it so happened I could render you this assistance. Pray don't thank me. I am glad to tell you here is our carriage. I was not mistaken."

"Miss Lewis has met with an accident," said Anarawd, a moment afterwards, in reply to his mother's inquiries. "I am sure you will permit the carriage to convey her to Clogwyn before you return home. She is unable to put her foot to the ground, and has only just recovered from a fainting fit."

Gertrude Lewis was lifted into the carriage with care. Anarawd sprang upon the box, and in ten minutes they swept up before the hall-door of Clogwyn.

CHAPTER V.

IT may be remembered, on last parting with the family of Bleddyn, Mr. Gwynne was buoying himself up with the hope that the Hafod property would soon be in his possession ; that he was mistaken ; and that his enmity was not inconsiderable towards the individual who had defeated his wishes. It was not long after this disappointment, for it was a grievous one, that he became desirous to acquire popularity and to secure himself a higher position in the county. He felt it was politic to do so, and now taking every means to be courteous towards his neighbours, he gave dinner-parties, accepted

invitations, and never omitted attending local meetings.

Thus affairs stood, until there came a change in the Ministry, and, at the instigation of his friends who had promised to support him, Mr. Gwynne stood for the county and was elected by a large majority. At the time of Gertrude's accident he was in London. Lady Elizabeth, on account of her health, had been obliged to leave him and retire to Wales in company with her son. When in perfect health the repose of the country was grateful to her, for she had ever preferred the unsophisticated charms of nature to the incessant routine of dissipation which distinguishes London life. On the present occasion it was doubly appreciated.

When Lady Elizabeth took her seat at the breakfast-table opposite to her son, she expressed her impatience to hear how Miss Lewis had passed the night, and was desirous to hear the doctor's opinion, as it struck her to be a serious case.

“ I fear it is,” said Anarawd, as he received a cup of coffee from his mother’s hand. “ She must have suffered acutely to have fainted as she did. I am sure it was ten minutes before I could revive her.”

“ Indeed ! poor child !”

“ And an embarrassing position I was placed in, mother ; I was greatly relieved when I saw our carriage.”

During breakfast, Lady Elizabeth, in broken sentences, remarked that it was unfortunate Captain Lewis was from home ; that the short time she was at Clogwyn, she had discovered that Mrs. Parry was no companion for Miss Lewis ; that there was a sad want of reciprocity of feeling between the two ; and how doubly dull it would be for Gertrude in her father’s absence. Mr. Gwynne, when the Lewises had first come into the county, had objected to her calling at Clogwyn ; and under present circumstances she did not see how it could be avoided.

“Of course you will go and see her,” replied Anarawd. “To judge, mother, from what came under my observation while you were with Miss Lewis and I was shown into the library, I should pronounce Captain Lewis to be a great reader and a linguist: such a profusion of Italian, German, and French authors; and no lack of English works either—most of our best authors. He is an admirer of art too; for a private collection, he has magnificent specimens of sculpture and painting—one picture in particular—I was dreaming of it all night. I regret, mother, you did not see the room. I wish we had such a library at Bleddyn, for I never saw one more to my fancy. I have heard you remark that any one can judge of the inmates, by the room they inhabit. If that library be the index of Captain Lewis’s mind, I should say he must be a man of refined taste, but not a voluptuary. How is it my father can disparage him as he does? I have heard him re-

peatedly use the most bitter and unqualified expressions against Lewis, expressions that would lead any one to suppose he was a man with whom one would not wish to associate. I know it to be a false character, and that few men have been more shamefully maligned than Lewis. To speak truthfully upon the subject, my father's conduct is unjust and unhandsome. Is it not so, mother?"

"Do not embarrass me by asking any such questions. You know, as far as it rests with me, I have always been prepossessed in Captain Lewis's favour. He won my heart by building the school. Every one must allow, in erecting that, he conferred a general benefit upon the country, for it was what Angharad wanted of all things."

"Yes, mother, it was wanted: my father ought to have seen about it, and built it years ago. Captain Lewis does precisely what the proprietor of Bleddyn ought to do. Were I in my father's place, instead of animadverting in strong language upon

the man who makes these improvements, I should feel some qualms of conscience even in mentioning his name. Oh! mother, I am stung with mortification when I think of my father's life. What good are we doing here? Who respects my father?—not a tenant upon the estate cares about him; and no wonder. Look back upon years gone by, and consider how they have been spent. We sojourn here for a few months: during that time we invite friends, and scamper over the country with them in search of amusements; eat, drink, and sleep between our pleasure-taking; and then return to London and spend our money,—all without giving a thought to the poor here, who have a claim upon us, if only as landowners. In fact, you must see, mother, in the position my father holds it is a sore reflection upon us that he does not do more for the place. Who could say he does his duty, and deserves respect?"

“ Say no more, my dear boy ; let us avoid the subject.”

“ I believe there is not another wife in the world like you, mother,” said he, getting up from the table, and standing upon the hearth-rug. “ Perhaps I ought to take example from you, and be a passive son ; but my spirit revolts, I cannot suppress these painful feelings regarding my father. I see him constantly doing things from which honour shrinks, and virtue recoils. Is it possible I can respect him ? you don’t know half what I have to endure. He has grown so close with his tenants, that they are constantly coming to me to intercede for them. At the recital of some of his mean acts, I blush. What can be worse than to see disgrace thrown upon one’s nearest relations ? My father does disgrace us. You must feel it, you must see it, mother, for the whole country sees it.”

His voice rose with excitement : at the same moment his eye fell upon his mother’s

face, and he discovered he had distressed her. Taking a chair, he seated himself by her side, and said in a penitent tone—

“Now I have vexed you, my dear mother; I generally do when I get into these fits of annoyance respecting my father’s conduct. I wish I had more control over my feelings. I have been hasty: I would not willingly cause you a moment’s pain—you to whom I owe everything, and who are everything to me in the world.”

“You do, Anarawd, grieve me. I would implore you, as I have often done before, not to express yourself in this bitter way, since no good can proceed from it. Recollect, my dear boy, there is a Providence over all. Keep that in mind, and your ruffled feelings will be subdued. We will say, in those lines of a foreign poet—

‘Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.’”

“Ah, my dear mother, I know I ought not

to speak of my father's faults, when, too, I am so far from perfection myself; both for your sake and my own, I will endeavour in future to seal my lips and close my eyes. I have you, my dear mother, all that the best of mothers should be; I am rich in possessing such love as yours, and own I ought to be contented."

"Well, my dear boy, remember, above all, what a comfort you are to me. I am amply recompensed."

A smile was exchanged between mother and son.

A few minutes afterwards Anarawd went to the window, and said, in a very hearty way—

"I am charmed to be once more in Wales. I feel free again. I can now climb the hills with my gun or my fishing-rod, and enjoy life. I don't believe I could support another London season—such a season! With me, it is nothing more nor less than a piece of irrelevant acting, to attempt to be what the *haut-ton* calls an

‘agreeable young man.’ Were I to be much in such society as we had in London, I should soon, from disgust and the desire to be opposite in character, become a bear in temper and address. What a life for a rational man to boast of!—daily dancing attendance on the young ladies, or becoming a *cicisbeo* to some frivolous fashionable matron; who is bent upon spending her afternoons in the shops of Regent Street or paying odious morning calls; and wasting nights in drawing-rooms, dancing, and footing it among diamond-bespangled dowagers, pompous household Ganymedes, and shoals of empty-headed fops, who look as if they had been wrapped up in cotton wool ever since they left off trap-ball at school. Really, mother, it is a marvel to me how men can submit to such an insipid life. What enjoyment do they find in it? I prefer any life to that of a London season.”

“The boy shows himself in the man,” said Lady Elizabeth, laughing. “When

you were a little child in petticoats, you loved the country, and had a strong aversion to seeing men with any tendency to unmanliness. Poor Mr. Gilford! it was a long time before you had any respect for him, on account of his effeminacy."

"Well, anything out of nature goes against the grain. Nature is perfect when untouched by man."

"True, but I must tell you, Anarawd, I wish to see a little more gallantry in you; were you not to shun the opposite sex, it would be better for you. There is no fear of your degenerating into a flippant fop; still I should be sorry to see you turned into a bear—the happy medium is best. You are young; be warned against indulging eccentricities: extremes—remember! are bad."

"I have discovered now, mother, why you were desirous I should remain in London, instead of going into the country with my friends to shoot: you thought a little more intercourse with the ladies would

soften my bearing. Was it not so, my dear mother?"

Lady Elizabeth smiled an affirmative.

"Ah, then, mother, I am afraid it has had the contrary effect: I was bored to death by flippant conversation—perfectly victimized, till I believe it has given me altogether a distaste for ladies' society."

"Pray, dear Anarawd, do not say so: you have been unfortunate in getting among a frivolous set of young people; but all young ladies are not alike, any more than young men. Do not forget that. If these are your feelings, I can only wonder you were so gallant to Miss Lewis last night."

"Oh, that was quite a different thing. Who could turn away from a person in distress? I hope I am not so void of gallantry as all that! It would be an insult to my best of mothers to suppose so. I only mean those 'fashionable' young ladies, without a vestige of nature left in them; they are my aversion."

“ I am pleased at hearing you say so. The society of ladies is particularly improving to young men. So do not shut yourself out from improvement, or, as I said before, indulge in eccentricities.”

“ What a grave expression you have, mother! Don't despair of me: if London society and Oxford have failed in dislodging these eccentricities you dwell upon, the army may have the desired effect of turning me out a more agreeable and promising young man; but I doubt if I shall become a better.”

CHAPTER VI.

IN the handsomely-furnished drawing-room, shaded by Venetian blinds, Gertrude was reclining upon a sofa, and the negress standing behind her young mistress, arranging a tall vase of fresh flowers which stood upon an ebony table. The door was suddenly thrown open by the footman, who, in a stentorian voice, announced Lady Elizabeth and Mr. Anarawd Gwynne. A cordial greeting immediately took place between the ladies. A fortnight had glided by since the accident; and during that interval, Lady Elizabeth had been almost a daily visitor at Clogwyn. The heir of

Bleddyn had not seen Gertrude since the night when he found her in the wood. He now approached, and, in his quiet, frank manner, shook her by the hand, and hoped she was better.

Not long after their arrival, Mrs. Parry made her appearance, with a little lap-dog in her arms. For some minutes the party was disturbed by the yelling of the miserable animal, that would neither be coaxed nor pacified. Gertrude did not look pleased; but Lady Elizabeth had the delightful gift of making annoyances appear of no weight, and setting every person at ease.

Taking her seat near Anarawd, Mrs. Parry made several attempts to enter into conversation; but each attempt was succeeded by a long, awkward pause. The talkative matron, however, was not to be daunted, and once more she resumed—

“ I see you are admiring our view, Mr. Gwynne. Captain Lewis thinks there is not such another in the whole country. It is

very fine, is it not? and yet cheerful, which to me is the most essential of the two."

"It is a lovely spot!"

"Were you ever at Clogwyn before?"

"Repeatedly, when I was a boy. These cliffs were my favourite haunts!"

"Yes," rejoined Lady Elizabeth, "he was so fond of coming to this dangerous locality, I was at last obliged to put my veto upon his coming here at all. I was in constant alarm for his safety!"

"I believe it was a wild, barren spot, before papa had the grounds laid out," said Gertrude. "You should see the view from the terrace at sunset; it is magnificent!"

"Perhaps Mr. Gwynne would like to step out upon the terrace?" suggested Mrs. Parry, rising in her usual fussy way, and opening one of the windows. "You will scarcely recognise the old place; so many changes have been made."

"Yes; but the cliffs—those old friends of mine, the cliffs—are the same still. Yet,

it is rather difficult to associate them with so many new and striking objects," said Anarawd, looking round admiringly.

"The grounds are what Captain Lewis prides himself upon the most; no expense is spared here. I often tell him he has an extravagant hobby; but he tries to convince me, that in gratifying his own taste, he is doing a fund of good to others, by giving employment to them. He is such a man for industry—encouraging industry, which, he will always uphold, is better than giving charity. And so in truth it may be, if one takes it into consideration. Many little mouths are supplied with bread and butter from these grounds. You would scarcely credit the number of men he employs."

"I think he is right; I am sure he is repaid. What a charming spot!—and what admirable taste, too!"

"You will never find any deficiency in taste wherever Captain Lewis's judgment has been at work!"

“ He has been a great traveller, has he not ?”

“ Oh, dear, yes; and his travels have not been lost upon him. He is a most amusing companion, a clever man—such a linguist! Foreign-looking as he is, he speaks English with fluency. As for Welsh, it is marvellous how he has acquired it: he knows it far better than I do, though I am a Welshwoman, and have never lived out of Wales. Then, you know, he is so clever!—too clever by far for me. I see little of him, for he is always with his daughter, who is the idol of his heart; never were there two so devoted to each other.”

“ Miss Lewis must miss him very much !”

“ Yes; for the first week she was inconsolable. I can only feel thankful she has become acquainted with Lady Elizabeth; previous to the accident, I could do nothing with her—she has been so spoiled by her father. She is just like him, reserved and proud, as the humour happens to take.

Amusing and agreeable as Captain Lewis is, you never for a moment lose the impression that he is not a proud man. He has been a good, kind patron to me ; yet I stand somewhat in awe of him. It is his nature to be proud ; I suppose he can't help it. Gertrude, too, with a strong will of her own, is only what I have said before, Mr. Gwynne—his counterpart. You may imagine, though we live in the same house, that we are independent of each other. I go my way, and they go theirs."

Anarawd smiled. She continued—

" I consider this accident a god-send. Fortunately, Gertrude has taken to Lady Elizabeth, which is a wonder. She rarely takes to anybody, and is a most unsociable young person. Sometimes for a whole day she will sit in the library, and only exchange a word or two with her black servant, who is fond of her to weakness, and spoils her fully as much as her father. You can have

no idea what I have to bear. She is a strange girl ; but I suppose it is her nature. You must see what a want of sociability there is in her character ?”

“ Knowing nothing of the young lady, Mrs. Parry, it would not be fair for me to venture an opinion upon her social character.”

“ Very true ; and there is this to be said, poor child ! that if she is unamiable, it is not her own fault. The injudicious manner in which she has been brought up, accounts for all. I am at a loss to express my thanks—indeed, I am overwhelmed with gratitude to Lady Elizabeth for taking such notice of Gertrude. Her ladyship takes a weight off my hands.”

While Mrs. Parry ran on thus volubly, Anarawd was admiring the view, and the ingenuity with which Captain Lewis had turned every nook and corner of his grounds to account. He stood for a moment before a bed of choice rhododendrons.

“ There is a great deal to admire in a small space ; is there not, Mr. Gwynne ? ”

“ I am enchanted with the grounds. You have a great show of flowers—how well the American plants vegetate ! ”

“ It can hardly be otherwise when there is so much pains bestowed and such a frightful quantity of money expended on them : but, happily, that is no concern of mine ! ”

A servant now summoned Mrs. Parry ; and, with a verbose apology, she left young Gwynne to retrace his steps alone to the house.

When he reached the terrace, he stood for some time in silence, absorbed in reminiscences of his boyhood. He looked down over the cliff into the sea, thinking how often he had stood upon that spot when it was covered with heath and blackberry bushes. A little below, there was the same block of stone jutting out from among the

trees, upon which he had stood a hundred times to watch the douckers, when the tide was out, rising and dipping alternately ; or to peep at the old owl in the ivy feeding her young. Yes, it was on that old stone he used to sit, like a little savage, dreaming about the Cambro-Britons, soliloquizing about warriors and heroes, in his young days of hero-worship, when, by the aid of a creative mind, the old bards and Welsh princes started again into life, and war-cries resounded in his ears ; and his ruling ambition was to be a hero like the shadowy beings he then recalled. What an odd, romantic boy he had been ! The recollections of the past brought a smile, then he grew grave as he stood musing—

“ A pretty hero indeed I shall make, frittering away my time and wasting my life, as I seem to be doing at present ! I believe, when a child, I had more eager wishes and exalted ideas than I have now. Is there nothing to be extracted from early

feelings and early impressions? What a problem is the human understanding—its growth, its power, its transitions! How jealous and watchful we ought to be of this great gift! There should be no retrogression, but one continual striving to raise oneself above the mass. I feel this, yet the steps I take forward are so slow that I can perceive no progression. If it were not for your sake, my dear mother, I should not rest satisfied to remain long at home. I would soon rouse myself from this state of indifference as to my condition, and endeavour to consecrate what power I have to my Maker, as every man ought to do!”

With these thoughts uppermost in his mind, he returned to the drawing-room. Lady Elizabeth rose—

“I hope, my dear, I have not exhausted your patience? I know your dislike to morning calls.”

“No, mother, on the contrary, I have

had much pleasure in walking round the grounds, and recognizing my old play-places with a new and improved face. Into what a charming residence has Captain Lewis converted the Clogwyn !”

“ Yes, papa takes deep interest in the place, and regrets his absence from it much.”

“ I could imagine any one growing attached to a home such as this, and never wishing to leave it.”

Gertrude looked up with one of her melancholy expressions—

“ I could run away from it to-morrow ! This home, that I once thought perfect, has lost its charm since papa left !”

Lady Elizabeth gave her a gentle reprimand, and told her it was wrong to give way to depression ; that she must promise to come often to Bleddyn and spend the greater part of her time with them ; and that it would divert her from dwelling upon her father’s long absence.

Gertrude felt some doubts whether her father would like her to accept the invitation. He was not there to give her counsel, her responsibility rested upon her own judgment, and to refuse the request would appear ungrateful and unkind. There was no alternative but to accept the proffered civility, and Lady Elizabeth arranged to call for her on the following day and take her a drive. During the conversation, Anarawd stood patiently by with his eyes fixed upon Gertrude's features. It was an interesting face; at least, he thought so.

The wild, harum-scarum boy had now almost grown into manhood. Surveying him as he stands there, we are at once prepossessed in his favour. There is something noble and impressive in his address, and his aristocratic head is well set upon his shoulders. His features may not be regular enough to call him handsome; but he has a most intelligent countenance, and his deep blue eye is remarkably striking. Re-

port informs us that he is unsociable and proud; a groundless charge, often made against reserved and thinking persons.

After Gertrude's first visit to Bleddyn, which she decided she would pay on the score of gratitude as well as politeness, she soon found the intercourse agreeable to her feelings. In the society there all was congenial to her ideas, and a strong friendship was soon established between Lady Elizabeth and herself. When she visited the ancient seat of the Gwynne family, into which for so many years she had desired to enter, and to explore the interior, there was always a welcome awaiting her. In the morning parlour, situated in a new part of the house, the windows opening upon a veranda, Gertrude was now frequently seen sitting with Lady Elizabeth, reading aloud or working. Occasionally young Gwynne would break in upon them, but more frequently he was absent among the hills shooting and fishing. Gertrude felt more

at ease when alone with Lady Elizabeth, because she stood a little in awe of his quiet, searching glances, which tended to embarrass her without her knowing why.

One afternoon, Anarawd returned from fishing later than usual, and seemed much fatigued from his day's sport. Greeting his mother's visitor in his usual frank but unconcerned manner, he passed on and stretched himself upon a sofa at the further end of the room. For more-than an hour he lay apparently so still, that Gertrude and his mother thought he had fallen asleep. Gertrude was in one of her lively humours, and conversed without restraint ; there was something almost musical in her voice and laugh, and Lady Elizabeth seemed designedly to promote her elevation of spirits. After conversing for some time, she begged her young companion to go to the piano and sing her one of her favourite songs.

“ We shall disturb Mr. Gwynne,” replied Gertrude, looking towards the sofa. “ He

is so tired, it would be unkind to awaken him."

"Thank you, Miss Lewis, for your kind consideration ; I am not asleep ; I should, as much as my mother, enjoy a little music."

As Gertrude touched the keys with her fingers, she wished he were asleep, or that he were out of the room.

The moment she finished one air, she was solicited to play another, and a whole hour glided away until tea was brought in.

When she rose from the piano, she was surprised to find Anarawd sitting behind her, and his mother out of the room. Having placed a chair for her at the table, the young man seated himself opposite.

"How merry and light-hearted you are ! I never met with any one who laughed from the heart's core as you do. It is absurd of you to talk to my mother of your unhappiness."

"If a laugh so admirably depicts the truth, it is better the world should see our

smiles than our tears. It is more agreeable to look upon the stage and be satisfied, than peep behind the scenes to our dissatisfaction."

"You deceive yourself, Miss Lewis," replied Anarawd, with one of his searching looks; "that was a genuine laugh. Do not deny it."

"Genuine? I am afraid there is nothing genuine in me but my deep affection for my father. How can my laugh be genuine? How can I be light-hearted, and at the same time one of the most discontented, unhappy beings in the world? You and Lady Elizabeth are both deceived in me."

"No, there is no deception in the case. Were you not genuine, my mother would not have that regard she has for you. If I thought you were speaking in earnest, I should regret it for my own sake."

"I am in earnest. If I act what I don't feel, how can I be genuine?"

"Would you, then, have me believe that

you are not naturally light-hearted—that that was not a laugh from the heart I heard just now ?”

“No, I did not say I was not naturally light-hearted. Before papa deserted me, I never was troubled with low spirits—never knew what it was to have the heart-ache. But, Mr. Gwynne, I don’t wish to argue the point ; I would rather not have my character analysed ; it is not fair under the present circumstances. I admit there is something undefinable in this charming old place that puts me into better spirits than customary, and for the time I am diverted from painful thoughts ;—I am happier.”

“Why do you not come oftener to Bled-dyn ? My mother is always glad to see you.”

“Am I not here continually ? I think sometimes I come too often.”

“Impossible. I was not aware you were here so constantly. I seldom meet you.”

“Because generally you are among the hills, or on the sea.”

“What did that look mean?—that I might be better employed?”

“I did not mean anything; sportsmen have a right to please themselves.”

“This right, then, Miss Lewis—the right to please myself—may appear, then, in another form. Suppose it might be my pleasure to go for a ride to-morrow, might I hope you would accompany me? I should like to take you to that mountain-pass we were speaking of the other day. You would, I am sure, be charmed with the ride. Will you go, and allow me to be your escort?”

Gertrude hesitated, but finally accepted the offer.

“Why did you hesitate? Have you no confidence in me? Perhaps you are afraid I shall lead you into danger, — such as a bog, or quicksand, or into some other desperate peril.”

“Not in the least; I could not well have a better guide than you who live among the

hills." Gertrude smiled, which perhaps did mean something this time.

"Here comes my mother and the urn. You are our tea-maker now: once in office, never out of it. Thus, if you don't come to us, we shall have to send for you, or be deprived of our evening beverage."

When young Gwynne conducted Gertrude to her carriage, he fixed the hour for their ride on the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

OF late years, all that Anarawd had seen of the Clogwyn was when occasionally boating beneath its dark shadow. Times had changed. At the base of the cliff upon the sandy beach his footsteps were now often to be traced ; and gossip whispered they were not the only footprints effaced by the advancing tide—that others of smaller dimensions were sometimes visible there.

One afternoon the heir of Bleddyn was in his bark opposite to the cliff in question. It was a wild-looking evening ; the mist and the spray commingling at times, entirely

concealed the boat from sight, and the screams of the sea-birds sounded ominously. Scarcely had he sailed out to sea, before a storm, which had been threatening over the hills since sunrise, suddenly lowered upon the horizon's verge ; the thunder rumbled in the distance, and the lightning began to illuminate the heavens, that were overspread with dark, stately clouds. Aware of the danger of the coast, Anarawd reefed his sail, and ran his boat into a little sheltered cave among the rocks, just below the Clogwyn. There he moored it and leaped ashore. He had hardly time to seek shelter from the rain in a fisherman's cottage, that stood near the water's edge, before it came down in torrents.

“ Well, Caddy,” said he, addressing a woman who appeared curtseying before him as he stood in the centre of the kitchen, “ how are your children ? ”

“ Quite hearty, thank you, sir. Dear me ! Master Anarawd, I no see you this long time in my house. You grow a great man ;

you be too proud, I suppose, to come and see Caddy now."

"No, Caddy, I hope not; as long as I am the son of Bleddyn, that charge shall not be brought against me."

"Years come very fast, and go," said she, looking at his tall figure. "I was think just now when you were a little boy. Dear me! I remember you come here many times and tell at the door, 'Caddy, I am hungry; give me some oat-cake, with plenty of butter upon it.' Yes, indeed, you tell that many times. Indeed, I am glad in my heart to see you here again; I am always glad to see the son of Bleddyn. I hope mistress is quite hearty?"

"She is very well, thank you," replied Anarawd, laughing at the woman's reminiscences.

"The rain come very bad now: will you sit down a bit, son of Bleddyn?"

"Thank you, my good woman, that will do; you have given the chair grooming

enough; you would make a good stable-boy. This, I suppose, is your youngest, the pet lamb of the family," he continued, drawing a little rosy-faced child to him. "You must not be shy: here is some money to buy a hat, for you seem to want one. What a plump little thing you are! Oat-cake, butter-milk, and sea-air make you thrive; there can be no mistake about that."

Anarawd had not sat more than a few minutes, when the woman was called away to see after the calves, which had huddled into the yard at the back of the house, alarmed at the storm. During her absence, two or three men came into the outer passage, and, without noticing a gentleman sitting in the kitchen, passed on and descended a narrow staircase leading to a room or cellar underground. A short time afterwards, another couple entered the doorway, and disappeared in the same mysterious manner. This was repeated several times, until a number of them had assembled in an apartment directly beneath the kitchen.

There was a great clamour of voices heard, and intermingled greetings. Some of the men's voices Anarawd recognized; but, until order was restored, he could not hear what they said. The planks with which the kitchen was boarded, to judge from their appearance, had been made of green timber. From one end to the other there were crevices through which the men's voices could be distinctly heard. With no little curiosity he listened to a conversation which was mostly carried on in English, though some of the party spoke it with a strong Welsh accent.

“ Well, Lloyd, my hearty, it was kind of you coming down in all this squall to see an old acquaintance. I am afraid I have been going on the wrong road ever since I left the Cambria. I was a fool to quarrel with my bread-and-butter: but it was my own fault; no one could have had a better master, or have been better off. The deuce take it! you see it was my love for spirits;

and the Captain not approving of it, settled the question between us, after serving him ten years. Was I not a booby, Lloyd?"

"Well, yes, 'pon my word you not do wise."

"No; who could live all that time with Captain Lewis without feeling he would suffer a great loss when he left him? But it was so; and here I am, turned adrift. I have become a smuggler, and find it an easier life on this coast than any other. Your magistrates are too soft to be up to our dodges: your gentlemen altogether in this country are not always over-particular. They shake hands with us sometimes in a corner, you know, and do not object to a nosegay or two, smuggled of a dark night into their cellars. They are nice boys—ha, ha! You see, my friend, I manage to live, and go on indulging my fancies. The day will arrive, I know, when I shall go a little too far to leeward; the fishes will get a feast then, while my spirit bolts off to another

world. There, Lloyd, I have made a long speech: I am uncommonly glad to see you; tell me all about yourself, and your good little missus, who keeps you in order without your knowing it. The best thing that can happen to a man in the world is your lot, my old friend. We fellows, you know, are such confounded fools, that we are sure to get into mischief like children when we are not spliced,. That's my misfortune; I am unlucky, Lloyd—I have no wife that I can call a wife, so I am going fast to the dogs."

"Stop, James, I no like to heary ou talk in that way; it is not right. Pity you not keep friends with Captain Lewis: he is the best man in this country, a hundred times better than Mr. Gwynne."

"The dickens! he might easily be that. The squire is as great a fool as I am; this is the only difference—he quarrels with his peace, instead of his bread-and-butter. But tell me, is it true the Captain has gone to Australia?"

"Yes, and a great loss we get."

“ And has he gone alone, without taking that little girl with him ? ”

“ Indeed, I am sorry in my heart to say he has, and she come acquainted since he left with the family at Bleddyn.”

“ By gingo ! mind what I say, that will bring mischief. The Captain always put his face against the squire’s dirty ways. I know more about the Captain than you do ; he will be in a devil of a way, you will see.”

“ This is what I tell my missus, and vex about it. What’s more bad, I hear to-day Lord Morlif is coming this summer to the country ; he has taken Bryn-y-Coed again.”

“ What, Lloyd, that gentleman scamp ! coming among you again ? You will have to be wide awake ; I know more about him than any of you do. He is Captain Lewis’s greatest enemy. And he ought to be muzzled when he comes into this country ; for he is the blackest liar under the sun. I know him—oh yes, I know him ! Though he is a lord, he is no gentleman : a man may be a

lord and yet not a gentleman. Mind, Lloyd, you keep one eye open ; he is no friend to the Captain."

" It is very odd, James, when I see the Captain leave the country I feel something come over me, and I say to myself, ' Pity indeed you no take the little girl with you.' "

" It puzzles me ; I can't understand at all how he could part with her. When they were at Naples, he never liked the child to be away from him for a day. If we went cruising in the Mediterranean—which we often did—he always took her, the negress, and the English governess with him. At that time, I know, she was everything to him. If any harm was to come to her in his absence, I don't know what would become of him. She was more than anything—ay, more to him than —"

" Well, James, what make you come to full stop?—more, more than—what?"

" The deuce take it ! I forgot what I was talking about ; I am absent, or this good

stuff is a little too strong for me. More? why yes, she was always more to him than most children are to their fathers. He is the best father, I know—that's what I mean."

"Well, to be sure, we all know that the little girl is everything to her father, without making so many words about it. Captain Lewis has been living now nine years at the Clogwyn, and everybody must see that."

"Nine years! Is it as much as that? Good gracious! Then I must have been nine years at this smuggling work. It was at Naples I quitted his service, just before he started for Wales. I will say I was sorry to turn my back upon the yacht and my Captain. The yacht was a beauty; I was always proud of her. Is she not a beauty, Lloyd? 'a royal lady!'"

"Not one like her in this place. I see scores come here backwards and forwards, but none like the Cambria."

"Nor was there one in the Bay of Naples like her either, that's my opinion; and it was

the rest of the crew's opinion as well. The first thing when I came here, I took the boat to go and have a look at her. I found her sitting there like a swan upon the water, quite as natural; and do you know what she did, Lloyd? Squeezed a good many tears out of my eyes; she did, indeed. When I got back, I was obliged to make my grog pretty stiff before I could feel myself. Aha! I was a great fool: a nice berth those fellows have of it now, and always have had. But, hang it! what is the use of fretting now? No use at all. A man often makes a slip in his life; and I have made a great one, there is no doubt of that."

For a few seconds there was a pause.

"No other news to tell us, Lloyd? Nothing going on in the country? How is Mr. Gwynne getting on, now he is a Parliament man?" asked a voice in a strong Welsh accent.

"Oh, it come much the same; make, as I see, little difference: we not like him a

bit better. He has not got a good name in the country: he has not the hand nor the heart of a gentleman; that's it. And there is that steward of his; he, too, makes a load of mischief everywhere. Indeed, truth I speak for us all at Angharad, we are not happy—no, not happy.”

“No, nor are you likely to be when you have a bad man ruling over you. A great sinner as I am, I have read enough of the Bible to know that. There is no peace for you as long as the squire is alive.”

“No, I suppose not; they tell that in the chapel, and I could groan about it.”

“I hear, Lloyd, he is as great a friend to the bottle as I am. Running on his last legs, it will be a race between us. We shall, perhaps, kick the bucket together; and a right good riddance the world will have—won't it, my boys?”

“No, no, James, don't talk in that way; be a little quiet, will you? I come here on purpose to tell you something.”

“What the dickens is it? Go ahead, my good fellow. Is it a sermon you are going to fling at us?”

“No, but I wish to open your eyes, my boys; I want to make you see you are not safe on this coast, snug as you are under the rocks here. No, you are not safe; don't you deceive yourselves. The coast-guards come just now sharp about their work. It was only last week there was a vessel, laden with snuff and tobacco, seized below there in the cave. If you are not off soon, they will catch you. For old acquaintance' sake, James, I come to tell you this. Take warning. I don't know how it is, but I see a change come over the country; the magistrates are more sharp. Two of them, you know, are English gentlemen. There is no possible to shake hands in a corner with them, you know. Dear anwyl! they make a great row in Angharad, the other day, burning our fishing-nets in the market-place,

and telling all sorts of ugly things that I not like to hear un t'all—no ? indeed !”

With a sudden start, Lloyd rose and continued—

“ Well, lads, I must go now. I have given you the warning. That's what I came for—make the right use of it.”

“ Going !—no, Lloyd, don't go yet,” said half-a-dozen voices ; “ you have not had a drop. Stop, that's a good fellow ; we have some capital stuff here that will warm the cockles of your heart for you.”

“ No, it is not possible ; I must go. Only remember what I told you. I should be sorry, James, to see you in prison—yes, indeed. Take care of yourself ; don't you drink that fire-stuff too much ; better come a teetotal than that. Though I am an inn-keeper, I tell you, James, there is nothing like being sober and honest.”

There was a general move ; chairs grated against the uneven boards, and voices intermingled, while Anarawd Gwynne had

ample time to escape from the kitchen before Hugh Lloyd, the master of the “Llewelyn ap Griffydd,” mounted the secret staircase.

As Anarawd wound his way along the ledge of the rocks, by a path which opened into the high road, he became bewildered and depressed. Now, he wished he had not overheard the confabulation,—then, he would not have missed it on any consideration.

On reaching the road, instead of turning to Clogwyn, which had been his intention before entering the cottage, he took the path over the fields to Bleddyn. As soon as he came in sight of the mansion, he stood still—“Why should I allow what I have overheard to disturb me? What can these low fellows know about Captain Lewis or ourselves?” he said to himself. “It is really absurd, supposing Captain Lewis to feel any resentment towards my family; it can only be on account of my father’s unhand-some conduct; and in showing attention to his daughter, it will be the means of bringing

about a reconciliation. Circumstances have singularly favoured us. Why, then, should they not continue to do so? why give the matter another thought?"

He walked on a few paces, and again stopped and soliloquized—"I cannot get rid of this disagreeable feeling. I wish I had not gone into the cottage. I have been deceiving myself, for not till now did I know how deeply I care for you, Gertrude Lewis! I am fearful lest there should be any interruption to our intercourse. Love is holy and unselfish; why despise it? why fling it away, when centred in a being so unlike others of her sex, unspoiled by the world—lively, gentle, and affectionate? If a little wayward, there is a charm in her waywardness—an irresistible charm. To me there is not another Gertrude in the world."

It still rained, and was nearly dark, when Anarawd retraced his steps, and reached the Clogwyn gates. He had again changed his mind.

On being shown into the library, Gertrude met him at the door.

“Oh, I am so glad you are safe!” said she, stepping back and sinking into a chair, as if greatly relieved.

“Safe? why did you think I was not safe?”

“Did I not see you in your boat tossing about in that dreadful storm? I did not see you land. I thought perhaps—no, I do not know what I thought,” replied Gertrude, growing confused.

“That I was drowned or blown out to sea?” said her companion, looking at her as if he were trying to fathom her thoughts, to which he had unexpectedly gained a clue.

Embarrassed by his peculiar manner, and seized with sudden alarm lest by these few unguarded words she had betrayed her secret, she remained silent.

Anarawd walked across the room, and went to the window. “Don’t you feel cold? Shall I shut it?”

“If you like.”

“Well, how stupid of me! I can't manage it.”

“It is not difficult,” said Gertrude, rising. “It does not require strength—it is only a knack.”

In passing by him, her hand came in contact with his wet clothes.

“Why, Mr. Gwynne, you are wet!”

“Yes, drenched; it is a miserable night. I suppose you have not been able to get out; I have been out all day.”

“Only in the garden, before breakfast.”

“And is this what you have been reading?” said he, glancing at an open book. “I should not have thought that trashy novel would have found its way into this house.”

“Anything that I fancy will find its way into this house,” replied Gertrude, with somewhat of a haughty shake of the head.

“And this is your fancy?” said young Gwynne, holding up the book to the light,

and reading the title in an audible voice; “an author Miss Lewis admires, so precisely correspondent with her character—so sympathizing, so harmonizing !”

“There is no occasion to be so satirical, nor to fancy yourself a critic ; are you sure you are competent to judge, either one way or the other ? There are many writers with whom I sympathize, but whom you, probably, would not appreciate.”

“I thought our tastes assimilated. You were ready to admit it the other day. This book, I am sure, you do not approve. You know you do not.”

“I am afraid I am troubled with a short memory. I don't remember what I said the other day : besides, I am not accustomed to be catechized. You must excuse my answering the question.”

“How imperious you are ! What puts you in this strange humour to-night ? You know it is all acting, nothing but acting. Why not be natural, like yourself ? Do

pray oblige me, Gertrude; throw the mask off, and be as you always are."

"What do you mean by 'always?' I don't understand you."

"Miss Lewis—Gertrude—you do know what I mean." His eyes flashed upon her face, and went straight into her soul; but she had wonderful command over herself, and defeated all his attempts to make her natural. It seemed to her he was taking advantage of those unguarded words, which she would have recalled a thousand times if she could. She felt angry with herself for not having been more cautious; but she determined he should be baffled.

With an unmistakeable look, Anarawd laid the book upon the table, moved away, and remained silent, standing before his favourite picture. Gertrude, in the meanwhile, looking pale and tired, lounged in an easy chair, and remained as silent as Anarawd himself.

"I think, Mr. Gwynne, you had better

go home," she said, breaking silence, and in a formal tone. "I am sure if Lady Elizabeth knew you were wearing those wet clothes, she would be distressed. Come, do come away from that idol of yours, and depart."

"No, I cannot go," said he, taking his place before her; I shall remain here till I receive better treatment. If I have offended you, I am grieved. Why, Gertrude, so cold? I dislike your being cold. What is the matter? are you not well? you look pale."

"Pale—what absurdity! How ridiculous you are! There is nothing the matter with me; though I think there is something amiss with you. Why keep reprimanding me, and calling me Gertrude? It is presuming of you, Mr. Gwynne, extremely free."

Anarawd coloured, and hastily drew himself up. "I beg a thousand pardons. I am not myself to-night, I own it. When I entered the house, I was not in a happy

state of mind. I cannot say the result of this visit has been the means of cheering me. Good night."

"Good night," repeated Gertrude, in a calm, cold tone.

He walked deliberately across the room; his footstep sounded in the hall, the front door opened and closed, and he was gone.

CHAPTER VIII.

GERTRUDE retired to her chamber after the departure of young Gwynne, and dismissing Yarico, sat a considerable time musing in her chair! Tears at length came to her relief, and, with her handkerchief to her eyes, she murmured to herself—

“ How I wish, my dear father, you had never left home. It would distress me to cause you sorrow, but how then can I ever be happy again? you will, I fear, never forgive me. I seem not to wish to care for Anarawd Gwynne, and yet I cannot help it. In this I cannot comprehend myself. Having made him unhappy, I feel miserable. He will

not, he cannot, ever have the same opinion of me again that he had before. How could I treat him so harshly and cruelly?—he pleaded so hard, too! I wonder how I could be so cold, when I was in a burning fever all the while. Why did he look as he did, when I told him I was glad he was safe? How foolish I was not to keep the joy it gave me to myself!”

Many similar expressions to these fell from Gertrude’s lips, and in bed that night she never closed her eyes.

Of the minor miseries to which we are liable, misunderstandings between persons strongly allied by affection or kindred are among the greatest. The deeper the affection, the keener the sensations; and however trivial the circumstances may be from which they arose, the bitterness of wormwood accompanies them, and taints all. Even then, if the cause is not removed, it is sure to rankle and corrode the heart, as iron is corroded by rust.

Anarawd Gwynne did not pass a happier night than Gertrude, and with a dispirited air he joined his mother at breakfast.

“The letters, I see, have arrived this morning, and your looks impress me with the idea that you have not had good news,” said Anarawd to his mother.

“My face betrays me, my dear; I certainly have not received good news. I have had a letter from your father, and he tells me he has invited Lord Morlif and his family to spend some weeks at Bleddyn. There is also a message for you. He wishes you to see about the horses being broken in: you know to which he alludes.”

“Lord Morlif coming here, mother? I heard he had taken Bryn-y-Coed.”

“He has done so; but the house, it seems, is not ready. Read the letter, and you will find your father has been in Paris all this time. There he met the Morlifs, and has persuaded them to return with him to Wales,

promising them accommodation here till the house is ready."

Anarawd expressed much regret at hearing of this arrangement. "I have no pleasant recollections of that man," said he. "It is singular I never hear his name mentioned, but our library in town comes before my eyes, with you standing at the window weeping. I was a little lad then. Did Lord Morlif cause you any trouble, mother?"

"He is not a desirable companion: I never liked your father to associate with him. He was no friend of mine."

She paused—her lips trembled. "Your father might have had more consideration for me, for he is aware the company of any of that family will be particularly disagreeable to me. I am much hurt at your father's conduct."

Anarawd had never heard his mother speak her mind so decidedly before, nor had he ever seen her so discomposed. "I am not surprised at your being hurt, dear

mother," said he, stooping to kiss her care-worn face; "no one can lament my father's unkindness to you more than I do."

Tears started into Lady Elizabeth's eyes. "Pray, my dear boy, don't say anything more. We have to bear much in this world. I have one consolation: I need not fret myself about you; Lord Morlif and his son will not lead you astray; I have too much confidence in you."

"Thank you for your good opinion. If I admire virtue and shun vice, I owe it all to you, who took such pains in inculcating high principles for my rule of life. I hope earnestly I may never cause you anxiety, mother; you have already too large a share from other sources."

The mother looked affectionately at her son, and assured him that though she was deprived of many blessings, he made up for their absence. She then changed the subject by referring to the three happy months they had passed together—the cozy

evenings they had enjoyed, and the pleasure they had experienced in Gertrude Lewis's society. Then again she alluded to the Morlifs, whose presence would be an invasion of their peace.

On Anarawd asking if his father knew of the intimacy which had taken place, she replied that she had told him, but that he had not once referred to the subject; adding, she hoped he would not make it unpleasant to Gertrude after his arrival.

“Why should you suppose that, mother? My father, with all his failings, never loses his politeness to ladies. He could not but treat her with civility under his own roof, although he abuses her father.”

“I hope so, my dear; but I am afraid Gertrude will be diffident, and not come so often as she has done. I shall miss my little friend in a thousand ways; the Miss Morlifs cannot fill her place. From what I saw of those young ladies at Brighton two years

ago, they did not prepossess me in their favour; I shall soon grow weary of their company. You are not eating your breakfast. You don't look well; is anything the matter with you, my dear? I hope you have not caught cold by sitting in your wet clothes last night. I wish, too, you would not go upon the sea when the weather is stormy. You made me very anxious about you the whole of last evening. I hate the sea; it has caused me many a pang, without your knowledge."

"I know the coast very well; there is nothing of which to be afraid, dear mother. If one does get a little wetting, it is of no moment, and only a seasoning for the storms of life. There is nothing really the matter with me. I think I shall go for a ride: air and exercise will put me right."

"The weather does seem inviting; what a change from yesterday! Should you be passing near Clogwyn, you will perhaps leave a note for me at the Lodge. I did not see

Gertrude yesterday, and I am anxious she should dine here to-day."

"I can take it for you; it will be an object in my ride."

While his mother was writing, he walked up and down the veranda, looking often towards the tall chimneys of Clogwyn, the only part visible above the trees. Gertrude was monopolizing his thoughts, and he became feverish and restless. Though she had behaved so unkindly to him, he could not help dwelling upon the delightful greeting she had given him. So eagerly, so heartily, had the words been repeated—"Oh, I am so glad you are safe!" Could she have used them if she had not cared about him? Why, then, should her subsequent conduct trouble him? He had taxed her with acting, and he was right. It was nothing but waywardness; an explanation and confession would set all straight. As to what the men had said in the cottage; their solicitude for the safety

of the little girl, as they called her, during her father's absence; how could she be better off than under his mother's care? Still, doubts would arise. It was possible she did not care for him, after all. He was buoying himself up with false hopes. She might treat him again with coldness, and to have a repetition of the same would be unbearable to his feelings. He persuaded himself he was happier before he had seen Gertrude—happier much when he went roving over the hills with his fishing-rod or his gun. He had never then felt such wretchedness, nor been one moment exquisitely happy and the next miserable.

As he passed hurriedly through the breakfast-parlour, his mother gave him the note for Gertrude, and he started in the direction of Clogwyn.

“Is Miss Lewis at home?” he inquired of the footman, as he stood before the hall-door, having the bridle in his hand.

“No, sir,” was the reply; “but I think I

saw her half-an-hour since, going round the walk at the edge of the cliff.”

The bell was rung for the groom; and having given up his horse, he descended a flight of steps which led into the marine path: nor had he advanced far, before he caught a sight of light-coloured garments fluttering in the breeze.

Gertrude was sitting in the heath, with her face averted. As he approached her, the waves beating upon the rocks below, and the moaning of the wind among the stunted shrubs, prevented her from catching the sound of his footsteps. Without uttering a syllable, he quietly took his seat by her side. She started, but was quickly aware in whose presence she found herself. She tried to conceal tears which were swimming in her eyes, but his quick glance had detected them. He said, in a low, earnest voice—

“ You are not unforgiving by nature. If I displeased you last night, I entreat you to

pardon me: say so, and let us be friends, better friends than ever." He clasped her hand in his own. She made no effort to speak, but he could read reconciliation in her eyes. Thus encouraged, he proceeded—

"Considering the opportunity we have had of seeing each other so frequently, and having exchanged our thoughts and feelings, it was foolish of us to quarrel as we did last night. We were very like children—don't you think so?"

"Yes, very."

"This must not occur in future; we must understand each other, Gertrude—you must let me call you so!" Then lowering his voice, he continued—

"I have a great many faults; I should be sorry to conceal them from you; but there is one pure and holy feeling in my heart, of which you cannot be altogether ignorant: that feeling is my sincere and deep regard for you. May I some day hope we shall be more to each other than mere friends?"

This appeal struck suddenly and sounded strangely in Gertrude's ear. She did not draw back her hand. Anarawd was holding it to his heart, but she trembled.

“ Gertrude, let me have an acknowledgment from your own lips that my affection is returned : say I may hope.”

“ No, no, we must never be anything but friends. It is a misfortune to us that we care for each other.” Here her voice dropped to a whisper.

“ Why, Gertrude—why a misfortune? When we care for each other, we should not be alarmed at trifling obstacles which seem to stand in the way of our wishes. All I ask for the present is your promise, your pledge. Give me that ; let us feel we are living for each other : it would be such a comfort, such a happiness, to both.”

“ Pray, pray, don't.”

“ Gertrude, why trifle with our mutual happiness ? why be over-scrupulous ?”

“ I would not be so ; but my father—Oh,

he will never forgive me! Besides, I could never, never make up my mind to leave him” She concealed her face and wept.

“Your father, Gertrude, would not mar your happiness. The more he loves you, the more desirous he would be to see you happy. You need not be separated; he can live with us, and I will make him perceive that my object in life will be solely to make his daughter happy. Trust me, dear Gertrude, I am not given to change: once mine, you will ever be mine. Do not waver; come, your promise?”

“Impossible,” muttered Gertrude with a despairing look. “I have done very wrong not to avoid your company. My father will never forgive me; I wish we did not regard each other.”

“Don’t say that, Gertrude; your father will see it was natural. There will be nothing to forgive. Do not hesitate to give me your pledge. I will solemnly vow that

no other woman shall share my heart, which you will never find change."

"Pray do not be rash. Why buoy me with a hope that can never be realized? It is madness. Your father will object, as well as my own dear papa."

"I am independent of my father. I have always met his disapproval. Supposing he should ever take an interest in me, it can have no weight in this matter. My mother already loves you; she will love you more for my sake. Pray, then, Gertrude, do not draw the picture of a gloomy future. The present is ours; let us use it. Give me your promise, and it shall be my treasure."

For a long while young Gwynne sat pouring into Gertrude's ear hopes and assurances, till his eloquence found its way to her heart and brightened in her face; in a faltering voice she at last gave him her promise.

"Again, say it again, Gertrude," said he,

drawing her nearer to him with a look of delight.

“Why so exacting? a promise once uttered becomes sacred: be satisfied, dear Anarawd.”

“True, it is sacred, Gertrude, and my vow is sacred. May God bless us—we must solicit his blessing.”

His manner grew more excited. “Gertrude,” he repeated, “can there be a greater joy upon earth than to feel we love and are beloved? You know those lines of Goethe’s—

‘Und doch, welch Glück geliebt zu werden!
Und lieben, Gotter, welch ein Glück!’

Shall I repeat the third line in that verse?”

He drew his arm closer round his betrothed; and with a new and indescribable pleasure he watched the blush which his words, like magic, spread over her delicate features. “You have not forgotten them?”

‘In deinen Küssen, welche Wonne!’”

That day, that hour, that moment, was an era in their lives never to be effaced. No account was taken of time. There

they sat with a splendèd marine view before them, but they were insensible to its beauty, they could only think of each other; the world was shut out from them.

Gertrude first broke the spell. She pleaded she wished to be left alone.

“ Will you send me away when we are so exquisitely happy ? ”

“ Yes, I wish to be left alone. I must be left alone. ”

As Anarawd rose, he asked what message he was to convey to his mother in reply to her note.

“ I shall be happy to come, but you will promise not to pay me any particular attention. You will tell her of our engagement some day. I should not like to keep it from her. ”

“ Certainly not; she shall know it, but not to day, the happiest of all days to me. ”

They walked together a short distance along the ledge, and then separated. Anarawd pursued his way, dreaming of happiness which might never be realized.

The moment Gertrude found herself alone, the words rose spontaneously—"He loves me! I possess his heart, and those lips so full of truth I can never doubt. But my father, when I think of him, I must doubt; fear mingles with my love. What will he say when he hears my confession?"

The bright and glowing vision which a moment before appeared to her excited mind became suddenly clouded, and cast its shadow across her brow, as she sat there pondering upon the uncertain future.

CHAPTER IX.

DINNER was announced, and Mr. Gwynne, with one of his insinuating smiles, gave his arm to Miss Morlif. They had previously been talking in an animated strain, and he had just given her the information that a ball was about to take place shortly in the county.

“A ball among these Welsh hills, that will be a novelty!” was Miss Morlif’s exclamation, as she entered the dining-room and seated herself very magnificently at the table. “It will be as amusing, I should imagine, as a German ball, where the society is not select, and the eye everywhere meets with disfigurement of the human form divine.”

“No, pray, my young friend, do not foster so erroneous an idea. Our Welsh assemblies have no resemblance to those upon the Continent; there is no mingling of classes here.”

“Really! Well, I suppose you don’t often get up these amusements in this dull country place.”

“Not so dull as you fancy. There is always something going on. If not balls, we have riding-parties, picnics, boat-races, and yachting. Folks know how to enjoy life here.”

“Most grateful intelligence! it is reviving to my spirits,” said Miss Morlif, turning her prominent eyes upon young Gwynne, and making a wry face as if a little sceptical. “I suppose we may scamper about as wild as we please, since there is no one to say this is proper, or that is improper. I like the thought of such primitive freedom amazingly, and begin to treasure up a hope, my dear sir, that life in Wales will not be so insup-

portably dull, after all ; we shall be able to exist."

" My dear young friend, you are troubled, I am afraid, with a short memory : did I not promise you, when I persuaded your father to come into this country, that it should not be dull ?"

" Oh no, Mr. Gwynne, I am not so ungrateful ; I have not forgotten your kindness ; but you are not aware of the amount of amusement I require. Before I was old enough to leave the nursery, I ate, drank, and slept upon society. Country places have ever been to me distasteful ; for the classes with whom we come in contact are such a dronish, uninteresting set ! It is out of the question to get on with them ; all we can do is to indulge occasionally in a laugh. Last autumn, while with my aunt in Hampshire, I was all but expiring from *ennui*. Do not then, my dear sir, be offended with me when I acknowledge I had terrible misgivings, on my arrival, that an entire summer in Wales would be joy-killing.

I find I am agreeably mistaken: with this promised novelty, and the prospect of various amusements, I am satisfied I shall not experience dulness.—By-the-bye, did you not promise to make a programme of what we are to do while at this dear old place?”

“I did; but, I regret, this week my time will not be at my own disposal.”

“In that case we must make the best of our trouble.” She turned to Anarawd, and claimed his attention.

“We shall expect you to figure as grand master of the ceremonies in the approaching scenes. Loving Wales as you do, and acquainted with its renowned localities and legends, we can hardly do better, papa says, than elect you *major domo*. But it will be a responsible post. I don't wish to deceive you: we are wild, giddy girls, and you must be prepared to show the gallantry and knight-errantry of old, in defending and shielding your lady-loves.”

“ You have selected the wrong person, Miss Morlif, either as master of the ceremonies, or as knight-errant. The honour, I fear, would sit ill upon me. I am one of those native bears which you and your sister were commenting upon a short time ago,—one of those animals that like prowling about the hills and valleys, in search of his peculiar fancies, primitive and countrified, as you please to term them.”

“ We shall not let you off in that way.”

“ Were I to accept the responsible office, I really am afraid it would have an effect upon my temper ; I should not be a pleasant companion,” pursued Anarawd. “ Do, for your own sake, appoint some one else. You have to learn that the great charm in this country is, that each individual is independent of the other.”

“ Independent! selfish independence, very shabby conduct. Is it not so, Mr. Gwynne ?”

A sneer came upon Mr. Gwynne's features, as he expressed himself pointedly:—

“It is precisely the conduct one might expect from him. If you hope to find a sociable and agreeable companion in my son, you will be disappointed. He is too fond of solitude, too great a country-worshipper, ever to be fitted for the civilized and polite circles in which Miss Morlif moves.”

“Oh, he must not indulge in such bad habits. We will stir him up, and lead him such a life! It will do your son good, Mr. Gwynne, will it not?”

“I doubt it. In such a character there is little chance of amendment. He is ruining himself by this absurd love for rural pastimes. The only chance left for him is the army—the best school for all young men, particularly for dreamers!”

Mr. Gwynne never addressed his son or spoke of him without sarcasm tainting his words, as it did on the present occasion. Anarawd, however, had been so long accustomed to his father's asperity, that if it

affected him, he never allowed it to be perceived.

Miss Mary Morlif, who was sitting near young Gwynne, not looking over-pleased at his decided refusal to dance attendance upon them, suddenly reminded her companion that he had promised to take them in his boat: she hoped he would not break that promise.

“Certainly, if I made that promise, I will keep it.”

“Not without making us feel we are under obligation to you,” interposed Miss Morlif, trying to attract his attention to herself.

“That must depend upon your own conduct.”

“What! will you try and exert your authority, and keep us in order? Is that your intention?”

“No; that would be too laborious an undertaking, and not sufficiently interesting.”

“Pray, then, what would be sufficiently

interesting to excite Mr. Anarawd's gallantry?"

Mr. Gwynne drew in his lips, and exchanged an odd smile with the lady, and asked her to take a glass of wine in the old-fashioned form; and until the ladies left the room he engrossed the whole of her conversation.

Not long after the ladies had escaped to the drawing-room, Rupert Morlif rose, and putting his hand upon Anarawd's arm, said he was dying for a cigar, and impatient to get rid of the fumes of dinner. Would he go for a stroll? Anarawd readily acquiesced, and the two young men stepped out upon the lawn.

"You must teach me the geography of this place. I understand there is a village not far off. I am sure there was a dearth of villages as we came along. What a thinly-populated country this is! Very striking, after being so lately in Germany. There, you never go a mile without stum-

bling upon a town or a village, or having your road intercepted by those nonsensical, humbugging processions *en route* to their shrines, which generally contain a black virgin, or something uglier. Have you ever been in that part of the world?"

"No, not since I was an infant."

"Ah, that's the thing you require. A man in these days must travel; there is no keeping pace with the world unless you do. I would recommend you to go, by all means: but, whatever you do, take care not to let your governor accompany you; he would worry you out of your existence before a week expired. For the last three months I have been a martyr to mine. This appears a similar case: no love lost between you and your father. We are fellow-sufferers, and should sympathize with each other."

"My father's tastes and my own are diametrically opposite. There is no hiding it from the world."

“Precisely so; and provokingly disagreeable it is, to have governors whom we care not a shot for, sparring at us and trying to keep us in order, when they require being kept in order ten times more themselves. The truth is, your father and mine both consider themselves still young men, and do not like having tall boys topping over them, looking more fresh and vigorous.”

Anarawd differed from him in this opinion; his father had never shown him any affection or consideration from his cradle.

“Lord! it is not the fashion now for fathers to care about their sons; and if we can only be independent, it matters little whether they do or not: so much for my logic. You know my father married when he was nineteen; but it was not an affair of the heart; consequently, at the end of five years he quarrelled with my mother, and separated. She came over to England, and he lived abroad, a kind of life, I imagine, he would not relish to live over again. I

never saw his face till I was twelve years of age."

"Your mother is not alive?"

"No; a few years ago she went off in a hurry. But, my good fellow, this is not a pleasant subject; let us drop it. What is the matter with your cigar? you have no fire."

"It is not a good one. However, it is of no consequence; I have no inclination to smoke." He threw it over the trees.

"Why, my boy, it is what you want to rouse you a bit; you are a cup too low, try one of mine."

"No, thank you."

"Well, if you discard my offer, don't let us dawdle here any longer. In which direction is the village? north, south, east, or west? I am just in the humour to kick up a row. It would be good fun to make the old women drunk, and set them all chattering like the apes of Gibraltar! Is this the way?"

"No," replied Anarawd, looking rather

stern. "I am not going to take you there; I have too great respect for the inhabitants."

"Nonsense! you are not in earnest, though you wear those ultra grave looks."

On Anarawd assuring him he was in earnest, Rupert stood still, and stared at him in the face:

"Why, what sort of fellow are you? not up to a spree, a little innocent amusement? Ha! ha! you are humbugging me!"

"In that sort of spree I could find no amusement. Is it likely I should choose to stand by and see our tenants insulted? In making such a proposition, one might have doubted that you were in earnest, for it seems to me a most vitiated taste."

"Ought I to be abashed at this reprimand? No, that would be humbug. If it is a vitiated taste, I must plead guilty; for to make old women merry, I consider is as good as a comedy." He stooped to gather a rose, and placed it in his button-hole. "Really, I am disappointed. I did not

suppose you to be this sort of fellow. You do want a little schooling in the army, to drum Methodistical notions out of your head: your father, after all, was about right. I understood you were a regular brick, full of life, up to a lark, the best shot in Wales, and a proficient in angling. With manly acquirements such as these, one cannot imagine a man setting his face against a bit of a spree: I cannot comprehend it."

"Then it is well you should be undeceived. It does not always follow, because a man is a sportsman, that he is wedded to low amusements as well. I have never had a taste for them, and I hope I never may; I am far too jealous of myself."

"Low amusements, my good fellow!—I suppose you would place cat-hunting in the category of low amusements? Now, I consider cat-hunting about the highest and best sport there is going. I have brought down such a tip-top terrier; he is a perfect little love. Is there a good show of cats in the

village? I am prepared to make war against the feline race during my sojourn here. I will scour the country so that there is not a cat left—Ah! I can see by that solemn air you do not approve my notions. By Jove! it is a woful pity a young fellow like you, heir to a large estate, don't know how to enjoy life. I wish, upon my soul, I was as well off as you are! Here is my father, with all his high connections and high position, he is such an extravagant man, that he keeps his son as poor as a church-mouse, and is never himself out of debt.—Is this the way to the beach?”

“ Yes.”

“ Let us, then, go and explore those caves you were speaking of before dinner.”

Rupert Morlif was in high glee; he did not require entertainment; his great delight appeared to be listening to his own imaginary wit, and laughing when he failed to make his companion laugh. He had wonderful volubility, and his animal spirits knew no

change. Long before they reached the beach, Anarawd was weary of his associate.

“By Jove! what a place for a gallop!” was Rupert’s exclamation, as they came suddenly in view of the wide extent of hard sands. “But the coast, I should think, must be dangerous with such rocks as those running out into the sea?”

“It is dangerous; we have had several wrecks since I was a boy; but it does not debar us from sailing. We have famous yachting on this coast.”

“Where do you keep your boat?”

“At Angharad.”

“And your men are there, too, I suppose? Is there no possibility of sending for her?”

“No; and it grows late.”

“Is not that a young lady I see there, riding alone?” pursued Rupert, following Anarawd’s eye, which was straining in an opposite direction. “Who is she — do you know?”

“ A young lady who lives not far from here.”

“ What is her name, and where did she come from ? Is she a Welsh heiress ?”

“ Her father is a man of property. They have lived in the neighbourhood for some years. Lewis is the name.”

“ Miss Lewis ? Well, she must be a bold girl to come here without a groom, on such a horse as that. Let us go and meet her. I should like to have a good stare in her face, to see what this Diana Vernon—this Welsh heiress is like. Is she pretty ?”

“ That depends upon taste.”

“ I have always understood Wales was celebrated for pretty girls. That was a great inducement for me to come down. I am an ardent admirer of pretty girls, and am on the look-out, you must know, for a pretty face and a fortune. Not a difficult thing to find in Wales ; for they tell me these hills swarm with old misers : is that true ?”

“ I do know of a few in this county.”

“And have they pretty daughters? I could not possibly marry an ugly girl.”

“Why, I hardly know: yes, perhaps there are some of the young ladies who may please you.”

“Glorious! Mind, I expect you to introduce me to them on the night of the ball.—Not in that direction, if you please; I must commence my search after a wife by inspecting number 1.”

“This is the way to the caves: you expressed a wish to see them.”

“Oh! hang the caves! I would see them at Hong Kong rather than miss a pretty face! By your manner I begin to suspect there is something remarkable about this young lady, which makes me all the more desirous to gratify my curiosity. Come, do be obliging.”

“How can you think of going and staring into a young lady’s face, particularly when she is unprotected? Besides, she is a friend

of my mother's: I could not accompany you."

"Why, that makes it the more absurd. If you know her, be good-natured enough to introduce me to this fair Diana."

"I do not think it would be agreeable to her."

"How particular you are! how solicitous you are about other people! A stranger would imagine you belonged to a philanthropic society. I see, my boy, I see it all: you are bent on cutting me out, that is quite clear."

Rupert thus concluded, following his companion, who had not waited to hear the last part of his remark.

After a pause, he began again—

"Confound it! I did not expect matters would turn out this way. I counted upon our being great chums, and that you would put me into the way of throwing a line and shouldering a gun. I, in return, would have repaid you with first-rate sport. My

tiptop terrier would surprise you. No one can have an idea who has not tried it, what fascination there is in a cat-hunt: if you were only once to accompany me, I know you would like the sport."

"No, I don't think I should. I dislike to see animals tortured: I cannot imagine any fun in it."

"Nonsense! you forget all in the excitement. You must see that little dog of mine; he is a fizzer! You would be amused to watch him prick his ears and give tongue; it is better than any music. Such an irritation in every hair of his body! you can see it all over him. By Jove! you should have been with me the other day, when the little devil discovered I had a cat in the closet. I never saw such antics! I laughed myself ill: it was the most ridiculous sight in the world. It is no use, my good fellow—I shall not be satisfied till I make you appreciate a cat-hunt."

He clapped his hand upon his companion's

shoulder, and laughed heartily at the recollection of his terrier's excitement.

After exploring the caves, they turned up the path which conducted them into the Bleddyn road, and had not gone far, when the sound of a horse's hoofs caught Anarawd's ear. Rupert stood and listened.

"Here she comes! I shall catch a sight of her after all!" cried the latter in delight, and turned round to face the young lady equestrian.

When Gertrude approached and saw Anarawd, she spoke a few hurried words, smiled, and rode forward.

"The murder is out at last!" exclaimed Rupert, as he joined his companion: "what a lucky dog, to have such a sweet smile lavished upon you! I see how it is: she is a favourite of yours, and you are jealous. I will make you more jealous yet, one of these days. Talking about it depending upon taste whether she is to be admired or not, why I don't know when I have seen such

a dazzling complexion and delicate features. She is decidedly a pretty girl; no one would dispute it. I will get introduced to her at the ball, and she shall be the first lady that I will lead to the dance. When I am bent upon showing the amiable to a young lady, there is little chance for others. I see you are a slow, apathetic fellow in these affairs; there is a want of gallantry that will not go down with young ladies. I shall, in consequence, stand a good chance of rivalling even the heir of Bleddyn, to whom every peasant in passing bows obedience, repeating cabalistic phrases, known only to himself. I might fancy I was walking with a prince. Is this the way you go on here, paying court to superiors? It beats the bowing and scraping on the Continent all hollow."

"What a heap of nonsense you can string together!" said Anarawd, laughing: "is there nothing sensible we can converse upon?"

"Why, my good fellow, we are neither priests nor scholars; what do we want with

sensible discourses? Don't suppose you will draw me from my purpose. I have some questions still to ask about this young lady. What sort of governor is hers? Has she any long-legged brothers, or any formidable male cousins, that are likely to tumble in one's way and treat one roughly — any foolish mamma who has the peculiar weakness of keeping her girls out of the reach of all young men, on the absurd supposition that they are unprincipled *roués*?"

“ Really, my good fellow, you must excuse my answering your questions. You have a coarse way of expressing yourself, which I can't enter into; nor could I give you a satisfactory reply.”

“ What an odd fellow you are!” said Rupert once more, looking full at his companion. “ I am sure you must be out of temper. Oblige me by taking one of my cigars: it will soothe you, and make you more amiable and conversational. The weed, you know, is a panacea for all complaints of the temper, and a sure

promoter of good fellowship. Pray accept one, extra fine, 'real Havanna, a perfect nose-gay; I never wish to have a better between my teeth."

In presenting the cigar, Rupert put on such a ridiculous port, that Anarawd could not help joining his companion in a hearty laugh. Shortly afterwards they reached the mansion, and he left Rupert, thankful to escape to his study.

"If this is not being bored to death, I do not know the interpretation of the word!" said he to himself, as he sat down to his desk. He then sought solace in writing a note to Gertrude, and afterwards joined the party in the drawing-room.

He found the topic of their conversation was the ball, about to take place on the following week. Mr. Gwynne had been appointed the chairman of the committee, and was energetic in seeing after the accommodation necessary for such visitors as were expected from the adjoining counties. A

band of music had been engaged from Chester, a man-cook and a number of waiters were to be in attendance, and the whole was to be conducted in first-rate style. To please Miss Morlif, Mr. Gwynne promised that, on the evening after the ball, he would engage the band to be at Bleddyn, and there should be another hop.

Lady Elizabeth had no voice in the affair ; Mr. Gwynne, Lord Morlif, and the two young ladies, made the arrangements without the slightest regard to her feelings, or whether she would approve of them or not. The marquee was to be erected on the lawn, coloured lamps were to be suspended in the trees, and blue lights were ordered from London ; bonfires were to be made in the grounds upon the hills ; while figures, dressed up as banditti, were to prowl among the trees, designed to promote the illusion by the light of the bonfires or the glimmering lamps, thus

forming altogether a fancy scene of some wild romance.

Mr. Gwynne appeared in excellent spirits. Lady Elizabeth inquired if her husband had any objection to Miss Lewis being invited to the dance.

“That is the young lady Rupert was raving about, after he came in from his walk,” said Lord Morlif. “A pretty girl, of course, is always attractive; there can be no objection.”

“Certainly not,” replied Mr. Gwynne, who was in such an elevated state as to make it doubtful whether he knew of whom they were speaking.

Anarawd grew tired of listening to their flippant and senseless conversation. He rose and left the room. Directly afterwards going to the stable, and ordering his horse, he started for Clogwyn.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and he was soon standing upon the terrace in company with his betrothed.

“I need not have despatched the note ; but at the time I did so, I did not know I should be able to steal away. I could not rest at home ; so you see I have come, late as it is,” said Anarawd, after the first salutation had passed.

“I am glad you sent the note, and still more delighted to have you with me,” was Gertrude’s ready response. “Is not the evening lovely? We can now enjoy it together, only I wish it was not so late.”

“Not till I came here, was I aware of the beauty of the evening.”

“What ! insensible to this delicious weather ? Quite an Italian day. The tints upon the hills and the soft air, have they all been lost upon you ? Have you been in a dream all day, dear Anarawd ?”

“No, dearest Gertrude ; but I have spent an unpleasant day, one of hard endurance. You can form no conception what odious girls those Miss Morlifs are. And their brother is no better ; he is the most empty-

headed fellow fashion can exhibit in its ranks. There can be no companionship with him. The only one who has any brains is his Lordship ; yet you would not at first suppose it by his flippant way of talking. They all have that flippancy of speech. Living so much at watering-places, and indulging in the most unmeaning frivolities, they have acquired a loose, jaunty, self-confident manner, to me particularly disagreeable."

Gertrude remarked what a relief it would be when they were gone. She pitied Lady Elizabeth.

"It will indeed be a day of rejoicing to her and myself. But do not let us waste our words on that uninteresting family. I am so thankful to escape from my home and be here ; you have become so essential to my happiness, Gertrude, that I am never happy but when I am with you."

"I feel the same, dear Anarawd."

His hands tightened over hers, and he said,

in his low, earnest tones, "You will not again wish we were only friends."

"I think not; but I have a dread, a sort of feeling that this happiness is too great to last. I am ever under a cruel apprehension it may be snatched from me."

"If God separates us, we must submit. As to earthly obstacles, I have too resolute, too unflinching a heart, ever to grow weary of surmounting them."

"Here comes Mrs. Parry!" interjected Gertrude, "to warn us of the hour. I know it is very late."

"Mr. Gwynne, you really must depart. It is nearly twelve o'clock; Captain Lewis never likes Gertrude to keep late hours."

"Very well, Mrs. Parry, I am going directly." He turned round, and observed to Gertrude—

"What I was full of a short time ago, I have not yet communicated. We are going to have a dance at Bleddyn the night after the ball, and you are to be invited."

“ Surely you do not wish me to accept the invitation ? ”

“ Yes, dearest, and my mother wishes it.”

“ What will papa say ? He would not smile his approval if he knew it.”

“ You will be under my mother’s protection. Why should he express any feeling of disapprobation at your coming to the dance, any more than your visiting us ? ”

“ I wish he were at home.”

“ What a deep sigh ! One moment you are so blithe and light-hearted, the next so utterly desponding. Have courage, dear Gertrude ; do not be so scrupulous. We shall take good care of you.”

“ I don’t doubt that ; still I wish papa were here, and that you knew each other—that he were reconciled and you were friends. I should not then fall into fits of despondency.”

“ Have greater confidence in me, Gertrude, and be patient ; submit passively to circumstances, instead of diving so deeply into the future.”

“It is not easy to command patience, nor to cling to hope, when it takes flight and leaves the mind restless and distressed.”

“These are small trials, Gertrude, which we must learn to bear with cheerfulness. Look forward to the time when we are to go hand in hand through life. The day will come, I feel it will.” After a long pause, Anarawd continued—

“Say now, dearest, that you will not make yourself uneasy about this dancing affair; there is no occasion for it. We are anxious that you should be introduced to my father; it will be a good opportunity—so you must come.”

Gertrude said she had never been at a dance, that she felt nervous, and had no fancy for going among strangers; but, as they wished it, she was ready to oblige them.

“My poor little apprehensive bird, I shall take such care of you. There will be no other meteor in the crowd; there will be nothing to me there but you, Gertrude.”

“ Pray don't talk of my being a meteor. I shall be longing to hide myself among the cushions in the corner of the sofa, or to escape to my quiet home.”

“ Your fears are more in imagination than reality. What will the crowd consist of, after all? Men and women, very inferior to my dearest Gertrude.

“ You should not, indeed, Anarawd, talk in that absurd way : if I am perfection in your eyes, I am far from being so in those of others. I find it necessary to examine myself more strictly than I used to do. Papa spoiled me, and now you are spoiling me, unfitting me for the world ; I shall soon become a useless member in it.”

“ Unfitting you for the world !—a delusion. Gertrude, will you not have me? I hope always to shelter you from the bitterness of the world. What does it signify? Spoiling does not diminish your virtues.”

“ That is your idea. Some day I shall have to reproach you for it.”

“ For what ? ”

“ For trying to persuade me I possess virtues to which I have no claim ; throwing a veil over your own eyes, as well as over mine. It is not wise : it makes me question your sound sense.”

“ We won't quarrel about this point ; I am willing to remain blind. It is far better to be blind to each other's faults than to be constantly disclosing them.”

“ Mrs. Parry is coming again ; she won't leave us alone, you must indeed depart.”

“ Say then, Gertrude, you will not reproach me, and I will bid you good-night.”

“ Yes, I will reproach you ; the time will come, I know it will, when I shall appear before you with streaming eyes, and blame you for the sweets on which you have fed me ; when what was once sweet will turn to gall —gall to both of us.”

“ Mr. Gwynne, I have come once more to insist upon your going.”

“ I am sorry to annoy you, Mrs. Parry,

in this way ; I have only a few more words to say to Miss Lewis, and then I will go, I promise you."

"Do, my dear Anarawd, say good-night at once ; she is not pleased."

"No, Gertrude, I cannot leave you with those words in my ears, though said in a half-jesting way. It was unkind of you to make such a speech just as I was leaving. You must recall every word, and make ample amends. Send me home with happier thoughts to dream of."

They walked to the other end of the terrace, and in cheerful voices repeated "good-night."

CHAPTER X.

A CROWD had collected round the door, and drew back as Miss Morlif, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and with a very *distingué* air, hanging upon Mr. Gwynne's arm, entered the country ball-room.

The apartment was neither small nor ill-lighted; but there was still a primitiveness about the whole, which to a stranger rendered the scene interesting from novelty, if not striking.

“ Sweetly pretty, extremely so !” said Miss Morlif, glancing round with not a little curiosity. “ What would they have done without your taste, Mr. Gwynne ? We have

to render you a thousand thanks for the interest you have taken in the arrangements. How well the lamps look, embowered in green! I admire the *tout-ensemble* extremely."

"I am glad the decorations meet my fair friend's approval. It is a pretty room."

"Yes, a dreamy-looking room, such as one reads of in books. With a good band and a chalked floor, what a charming evening we shall have! How the people must rejoice when you come among them, Mr. Gwynne! In this rural neighbourhood I could imagine your being looked up to as if you were a prince."

"Oh yes, I am the prince here," replied her companion, laughing and colouring at the same time. "We had better take a seat here; it will be a good position to see the company as they enter. I will give you permission to quiz my countrywomen, provided you will acknowledge they have a good share of beauty. In that party

just entering are our banker's daughters,—sweet comely-looking girls, and well attired, are they not?"

"Rather provincial."

"Oh no, don't say that; a London milliner has been at work there. I beg you not to use the word 'provincial.' There is a good deal of style about them."

"Mr. Gwynne, how can you say so! Out of courtesy to your countrywomen, I suppose you will be blind to their defects, and will not acknowledge them."

"Now oblige me, my young friend: take a general survey; tell me if you do not think there are a great number of pretty faces and well-dressed women in the room? The Welsh girls, it is proverbial from days immemorial, are fond of dress. There is a good display of it this evening."

"Tastes differ. There may be a pretty fair sprinkling of handsome dresses and comely faces; but at a glance (I must use the

word to which you object), they are 'provincial'—decidedly 'provincial.'"

"I am afraid you are fastidious."

"Not in the least. Town and country, all will allow, are very different. What can we expect? If a dress is made in London, the wearer will not wear it as it should be worn. Their ladies' maids in the country are, perhaps, not so *au fait* at their work as ours. Without being more explanatory, you must see, Mr. Gwynne, there is something wanting."

Her companion laughed—"A pretty face, let it be countrified or not, always claims a certain degree of admiration. I still maintain, there is much beauty to be seen here to-night."

"Well, perhaps there is ;—certainly a predominancy of pink and white, which is by the opposite sex often mistaken for beauty."

"How severe! The haughty beauty might be a shade more generous."

With a significant smile and his usual blandishment of manner, Mr. Gwynne offered the lady his arm and led her away to open the ball with him.

Lord Morlif had selected the acknowledged county belle—for there is one so characterised in every county place—and to her he was holding forth on the charms of the ladies, the independence of the country, the hospitality of the gentry, the civility of the peasantry, and, by way of conclusion, the further declaration that he was so pleased with Wales, he should not object to spend half his life in the Principality, only with the proviso that he should have the supreme felicity of meeting once a month so many sweet faces as were then and there assembled.

The dancing had not long commenced, when young Gwynne, with his mother upon his arm, entered the room. He immediately conducted her to a seat at the upper end.

Showing no inclination to join the gay throng, he sat conversing by her side.

“ I wonder young Mr. Gwynne does not dance. With such a figure as he has, he would look well, spinning round with one of those handsome Miss Morlifs, or with my daughters,” remarked the banker’s wife, who was sitting in great state on a bench watching couple after couple whirling by her. “ He is not half such a man as his father was at his age in amusements of this sort ; he always showed much spirit, and made something of himself. His son, on the contrary, appears to be a stupid young man ; very stupid.”

“ Do you think so ? ” replied an elderly gentleman who was sitting by her side. “ I can’t agree with you. There is no stupidity in that face, no dulness in those eyes. It is an intellectual face, and particularly prepossessing.”

“ Ah, perhaps I am wrong. Now I reflect, his eyes are more fierce than dull, and it would be more accurate to say that he is stern and proud.”

“ Pardon me, I must again differ from you. He has a frank, condescending address. I have often remarked it, and those who know him intimately would affirm what I state.”

“ Indeed! Well, I know little of the young man. He is not altogether popular amongst us. He keeps himself aloof, and perhaps shines more out of a ball-room than in it.”

“ You have arrived at the truth; but you surely would not blame him for that, nor think it a drawback with a young man.”

“ I am afraid I do blame him; it shows a singularity of character. Now, being singular is, in my opinion, just as bad as being stupid. I prefer those who can make themselves agreeable to the multitude; I hate your thinkers and your philosophers. They are no companions; they are much better shut up with their books in their libraries. The owl we call the bird of wisdom is the dullest and most inert of all creatures; so it is with your wise men. Give me an amusing

companion ; let me have the multitude, who can discourse suitable nonsense ; let me have him who can deal in small talk, whenever it is required of him."

Glancing perhaps with inward significance at the profusion of gay ribands adorning the head-dress of his lady companion, the grave old gentleman relapsed into silence.

Scarcely had half-an-hour passed, when it was whispered from one to another that Lady Elizabeth was ill. Shortly afterwards young Gwynne, supporting his mother, threaded his way through the crowd, and disappeared from the gay scene.

" Shall I order the carriage to the door, mother ? you will not go again into that hot room," said Anarawd, when Lady Elizabeth had recovered from her faintness.

" Yes, my dear, I do not feel equal to remaining here ; I must go home. I need not take you with me. Margaret is here, and Williams ; they will pay me every attention."

“ I could not think of such a thing ; you must allow me, my dear mother, to accompany you. I have no wish to remain.”

“ The evening, my dear, is only just begun. You had better stay an hour or so longer.”

“ Oh no, mother ; what does that matter ? I shall not be missed. I should prefer returning with you.”

As they drove home, the soft-sea-breeze sweeping through the valley was so pleasant and refreshing, that, by the time they reached Bleddyn Lady Elizabeth felt no ill effects from her indisposition, and appeared not less pleased than her son to reach home.

After sitting for some time conversing with his mother in her dressing-room, Anarawd rose, and wishing her good night, retired to his chamber. The din of music and the confused hum of voices were still sounding in his ears ; and the gay company had quitted was still fluttering before his vision. He had no inducement to return to the giddy scene. Indeed, he was thankful

to escape from it. With no inclination to go to bed, he changed his dress, and once more sought the open air.

It was a lovely night; the moon was shining brightly above his head, and the soft landscape, dreamy and beautiful, operated like a composing draught to his spirits. For the first half-hour he continued parading the broad walk facing the old mansion, when a sudden thought arose that he would take his fishing-rod, and try for a trout in the lake among the hills, not far distant. He might get there before sunrise, the best time for the fish to bite.

As he continued on his solitary route among the rocks and heath, he rejoiced to be alone with nature, unmolested and undisturbed. Occasionally he stood to look down into the valley, where the lights were streaming from the ball-room window. The gay assembly he had lately left came again vividly before him. He felt a revulsion to any second entry into that room, and wished

both he and his mother had kept away altogether. "What could be more unseemly than to witness there his father's levity of conduct—what more painful than his total neglect of his virtuous mother, who always endeavoured to screen the faults of him who continually wronged her? Though she kept her wrongs to herself, could he not see through it all? could he not read her heart, and sympathize with her without her being aware of it? Since the arrival of the Morlifs, matters had grown worse. His father appeared to be infatuated with Miss Morlif, and she took every opportunity of encouraging him. How girls could be pleased and flattered by the attentions of married men, was to him inexplicable; it showed such a want of good feeling and delicacy. Yet what might not be expected from worldly and fashionable people, regardless of principle? Had his own father possessed honourable and upright feelings, he would not have invited such a family to

his house. He had chosen to do so, and, moreover, spoke of them as his best and dearest friends. On reviewing his father's life, he could not feel due respect for him. Unnatural as it might appear to the world, he never recollected the time that affection for his father had a place in his heart. His mother had never told him to imitate his father, but had endeavoured to impress upon him that it was the duty of a child to love and respect a parent. On that point he could never implicitly obey her. He questioned whether it was his duty, and his mother was pained at the unnatural feelings which he would occasionally express. What had not those struggles cost him? A world of misery had, unknown to her, been shut up in his own heart, and he believed it had an effect upon his character. It had marred many of the hours of his youthful joyousness, and had caused feverish passions and strange ideas to haunt his mind, which in all probability would never have existed, had he been

blessed with a good father. He felt it more in early life than he did now. He was then unable to investigate the difficult questions childhood was ever prompting. He could not then satisfy himself, that however unnatural a son he was, and however unyielding to his mother's entreaties, it was his misfortune, not his fault, that he could not honour and love the being to whom he owed his existence. Would any one question whether it were natural or unnatural, right or wrong, that he had not felt love or respect, when no love or respect was really due? Would any one blame him for encouraging feelings of thankfulness to Heaven for having planted early in his breast a sense of what was right and virtuous, and what was debasing; of that which he should strive to imitate, and that which he should avoid? The world might judge him as it pleased. In his own heart there would never cease to be feelings of gratitude that he had learned early not to approve or imitate his

father's habits, but rather to hold them in abhorrence.

He walked on, glancing occasionally at the lights in the valley. They were still dancing and feasting there, and his father, perhaps, indulging beyond all limits in his debasing propensities. The conversation of the smugglers in the cottage, before related, recurred to him at this moment. It was evident, as he had always suspected, that the lower class had not the slightest regard for Mr. Gwynne. They had spoken disrespectfully of him, and had decided the question with the hum of approving voices that the squire had neither the hand nor the heart of a gentleman.

These were not pleasant reflections for a son. They rankled in his bosom the more deeply, on account of his poor mother's misfortune of being linked to one so unworthy of her. Could he ever be attentive and considerate enough to his dear mother, his poor neglected mother?

With a flushed face, and his eyes kindling, he hurried forward, as if to get away from his own thoughts, and reached the summit of a favourite eminence just in time to see the sun rise. He loved Nature to his heart's core, and could appreciate her beauties in whatever garb she decked herself. The scene now before him was imposing, and it was with gloom upon his heart he watched the day break. The blue and grey hills, and lake reposing beneath, were beginning already to be tinged with an incarnadine hue. Summer looked fresh in her virginity. The rich colour, not only upon the hills, but the foliage in the glen beneath, he thought he had never seen in greater perfection. He wished his dear Gertrude there to enjoy the tranquil beauty around him, for it seemed as if she only was wanting to make it perfect.

After lingering there for some time, he hurried down the declivity, and soon found himself standing upon a block of stone,

throwing in his line with all the adroitness of an experienced angler.

As the hours stole on, the day continued uninterruptedly fine; and not till the sun began to drop behind the hills in the west, did he contemplate returning home. Whistling to his dogs, and putting up his tackle, he was quickly some distance from the picturesque lake in the hollow, and crossing the moor on his way to Bleddyn.

Once more he began musing: soon the monotonous and stupid polka would again commence, again the former din would assail his ears, and he would see his home converted into a sort of heartless Vanity fair, his father and Lord Morlif the two most conspicuous figures in the scene. What a change to the quiet evenings he had spent with Gertrude and his mother! He grew weary and discontented at the prospect of the coming evening's festivities. He knew his mother would not enjoy them; and Gertrude would rather have remained at

home. He should be thankful when the night was over, and he could steal away and spend quiet and happy hours at Clogwyn, for now his most delightful moments were spent there.

A small cottage at the instant came in sight, and, feeling painfully hungry, he stopped and entered the low doorway, in the hopes of obtaining a little refreshment.

The inmate, a woman with a good-tempered smile, begged he would take a seat upon the settle, and she would in a few minutes make him a cup of tea, and give him the best of bread and butter. While busy at her preparations, the young sportsman, overcome by fatigue, fell as fast asleep as if he had been reposing on his own down-pillow. On rousing himself, he was not a little surprised to find the fall of evening had arrived, and it was high time to be off. Partaking hastily of the good woman's cheer, and remunerating her much against her will, he once more started on his way home,

accompanied by his usual companions, two fine retrievers.

The instant he reached the old mansion, he went to the back entrance, and hurried up stairs to his mother's dressing-room, anxious to ascertain how she was, after the previous night's indisposition. His knock for admittance was answered by a light step hurrying across the apartment. On the bolt being withdrawn and the door opened, Gertrude, robed in white, stood before him.

This unexpected meeting so overjoyed him, that he forgot his mother's presence, and was about to give her a warmer greeting than usual, when she raised her hand playfully and gave him timely warning.

When his inquiries had been satisfactorily answered, Lady Elizabeth asked him what he thought of Gertrude's dress, whether it became her, and that he did not think it was particularly chaste and pretty?

Anarawd did not require being asked such a question twice. He instantly turned round,

and glanced again upon Gertrude's sylph-like form.

“ Why, mother, she looks like one of the gossamer clouds I saw blown off Snowdon this morning at sunrise! She will make a sweet little bride for me—will she not?” He took hold of Gertrude's hand, and drew the blushing girl to him. “ Mother, you will give us your consent and your blessing? I have been wishing to tell you for some days, that I have stolen Gertrude's heart against her will, and she has taken possession of mine in return. You will not, I know, dear mother, throw a cloud over our happiness by refusing to give your consent to our being some day united.”

“ My dear boy!” exclaimed Lady Elizabeth.

“ You are not surprised—you cannot be surprised. Gertrude and I have seen so much of each other lately. Who could be constantly in the company of a dear little creature like this without loving her? You love

mother, and you will love her more for my sake, since I love her so deeply.”

Lady Elizabeth was startled, and tears came into her eyes. There was a pause, when Gertrude dropped upon her knees, bent forward, and looked anxiously in her face.

“ I am afraid I have not acted as openly as I ought to have done—that I have taken an unfair advantage of your kindness. You are displeased. Oh! dear Lady Elizabeth, forgive me.”

“ Gertrude is not in error; if any one is to blame, it is myself. Therefore, my dear mother, don't reproach her. She will make you a good daughter—she has promised to do so—and where could we find another Gertrude, one so congenial to the feelings of both?”

“ Yes, my dear, I am ready to admit all that you have pleaded, and more. I should not hesitate to give you my consent, but that will not avail anything. Captain Lewis and

your father have to be consulted. I am fearful you will have opposition to your wishes."

"You will consent; and your love and blessing are all I ask. Give us those, dear mother, and do not be anxious any further about us. By the aid of Providence, I trust to step in time over all opposition. I would run a thousand races for such a prize."

"What a hopeful face you carry!—may you not meet with disappointment. As to you, my dear Gertrude, do not shed tears; I am not angry with either of you; but I confess I have been blind: I was little prepared for the intelligence. Kiss me; rise; you must not spoil your dress nor disfigure yourself by weeping."

"Yes, kiss her, my dear mother, and make her feel she will have a welcome into my family from you at least."

"Yes, she shall have a welcome from me.

God bless you both, my dear children, and help you when all other help fails."

They mutually thanked her; and Gertrude was gratified by one of Lady Elizabeth's benevolent smiles, and an affectionate embrace.

A little time elapsed, when Anarawd, addressing Gertrude, said—

"I have not looked at your dress yet." He drew her to the light. "I am glad to see you have not any of those flaunting flowers or gaudy ribands, hiding what Nature has given you, in the most beautiful of all ornaments, the hair."

Lady Elizabeth smiled. "He has peculiar fancies about ladies' dress; but you must not always be guided by him."

"No, dear Lady Elizabeth; he is aware I have a will of my own; papa is very particular."

"He can hardly be more so than Anarawd. He takes dislikes to persons, sometimes only from the mode in which they dress."

“ Well, I confess I hate to see persons over-dressed or ill-dressed. Gertrude, you will see, mother, has fortunately learned the art of dress without making a study of it—a thing too many young ladies do, and become absurd objects in the end.”

“ He therefore approves, Gertrude, of your dress,” said Lady Elizabeth, amused. “ Do you not see some defect in it, Anarawd? a contrast, it strikes me, is wanting. Before you appeared, I was offering Gertrude a bunch of those carnations: the delicate green, and rich red upon the white, would look well; such was my suggestion.”

“ Oh no, it would spoil the whole effect. My mother seems anxious to make a rainbow of you. I like my little gossamer cloud best. Do, pray, take away those gaudy carnations; we don’t want any of them, do we, Gertrude? ’

“ You must now go and dress,” interposed Lady Elizabeth; “ your father wishes us to be early in the refreshment-room.”

“ There can be no hurry; there is plenty

of time. It is far more agreeable to be here, than it will be in those noisy, gaudy rooms," was Anarawd's reply, without taking his eyes off Gertrude.

Again and again Lady Elizabeth had to remind him of what she had said, before she could get him to stir from the easy chair in which he had sunk.

"Must I, then, really go? What a bore it is! Dress is a monstrous trouble, when one is tired, and comfortable here. What would I give to have a nice quiet evening such as we used to have!" He looked at Gertrude, then at his mother.

"Yes; I, too, should prefer it much; but we can't have what we desire in this world. We must conform to circumstances; rich and poor alike—none are exempt; we all have to practise self-denial—to submit to every-day crosses: it would not be life without it."

"You are right, no doubt, my dear mother. During the time these detestable

Morlifs infest our house, we shall certainly have more than our share of self-denial. I wish they were gone; they make one feel a stranger in the paternal home. Gertrude has not seen them yet; and she is nervous at going among so many strangers. You will think of this, my dear mother, and will have some consideration for her. Don't look grave upon the present event. Consider how happy you have made us by your kind words; we deeply value them."

"Go, go—do, my dear boy; and while you are dressing, Gertrude and I will have some private talk."

An hour later Lady Elizabeth and Gertrude were descending the staircase, when Anarawd again joined them, and presented Gertrude with a beautiful spray of white heath.

"That will be a sufficient contrast," said he, holding her handkerchief and fan as she fastened the flower upon her person. They exchanged smiles.

Music was heard in the hall, and the hum of voices, as they drew near the reception-rooms, grew louder and louder.

“ You don’t feel nervous now, do you, my dear ? ” inquired Lady Elizabeth.

“ Yes, dreadfully so. It is extremely foolish of me. ”

“ It will only be at first ; don’t think about it ; you will soon regain your courage. ”

“ I will endeavour, ” replied Gertrude, feeling at the same time that Lady Elizabeth did not know what it was to feel as she felt, because few had been brought up in the like seclusion. She longed for her father’s presence. On entering the room she was in a tremour, and much embarrassed. The number of eyes turned upon her increased the perturbation of her feelings. Most of the company had arrived, and she could scarcely recognize the quiet, comfortable, old-fashioned drawing-room, adorned and illuminated after Miss Morlif’s suggestions. It was dazzling, and the contrast

so striking that it made a deep impression upon Gertrude.

Mr. Gwynne was not in the room. Rupert Morlif was standing near the door, with a knot of young men. The moment he saw them, he crossed the room, and requested to be introduced to the fair Diana. The first thing he did was to question Gertrude why she was not at the ball, and wished to know whether the cause arose from any tiresome, jealous old maiden aunt, who could not enjoy the sweets of life herself, and would not suffer her to participate in them. Perhaps it was some high sister-of-charity notions, or any other notions that were prevalent in the present day, not thinking it right to patronize public amusements—that considered dancing a sin; or perhaps she was under the influence of some pet clergyman, who bound up her will, and would not let her do anything she pleased.

Gertrude slightly bent her head, and answered his interrogations in a quiet but

short way, showing that she did not feel prepossessed with him or his language.

On Anarawd finding them a seat, Rupert was obliged to move away to make room for others. Taking the young heir by the button-hole, he drew him aside.

“What a stupid fellow you were to run off in the way you did last night! I never spent a merrier evening in my life. So many pretty girls, so sweetly original; they have laid siege to my heart already; don't marvel if you hear I am quite killed.” He waved his hand in repeating the last sentence, and hurried away to greet a party that entered at the moment on the opposite side of the room.

The whole of the evening he was taken up with his new acquaintances, and dancing about like a madman. With each of his partners, he made an arrangement to meet either at the hunt-ball in the adjoining county, or in a picnic, or a sailing expedition. No one was in such exuberant spirits.

as Rupert Morlif. Every one asked who that young man was with the light hair and thin figure, making himself so agreeable to the ladies.

Lord Morlif and Mr. Gwynne were standing in the crowd, just as one of the dances commenced, when the former, raising his eyeglass, inquired—

“Who is that young lady dancing with Rupert? She was not at the ball. By Jove! she is a sweet pretty creature; so graceful!—good blood there, good blood.”

“No, you are mistaken,” said Mr. Gwynne with one of his cynical laughs; “she is Lewis’s daughter.”

“What! is that Miss Lewis? Impossible that that Moor can have such a fair daughter!”

“She may take after her mother; it is his child.”

“And the one he has made so much of; his treasure of treasures.”

Lord Morlif’s deep-set eyes were fixed upon Gertrude’s face the whole time she

was dancing. A smile froze upon his lips as he said to himself, "So that is the child—Lewis's daughter; and he in Australia! What could he have been thinking of to leave her behind?"

After pondering for some minutes, he turned to his friend—

"There is something very attractive about that young lady. I hear she speaks Italian like a native; it will be a treat to have a chat in that language. Gwynne, you must introduce me to her."

"What will Lewis say if he hears you have been paying his daughter attention? Be on your guard, my friend; you had better not meddle with any one belonging to him again."

"For Heaven's sake, Gwynne, don't rout up old things. Let bygones be bygones: who likes being reminded of anything unpleasant? Jove take the fellow! I never did consult his feelings, nor have I any intention of doing so now. *Nolens volens*, he

shall be baffled. Child as she is, she pleases my fancy ; she has bewitched me already.”

“ Recollect, Lewis is not a man to be trifled with, and he adores his child.”

“ Ah, I am aware, quite aware of it.”

“ For my own part, I would rather steer clear of him, and I feel annoyed at the intimacy which has taken place in my absence. To please my lady, I say nothing, and shall leave the matter alone till Lewis returns. Then our enmity will not be a whit different from what it was before. Lewis, that code-teaching upstart, shall never enter under my roof again, I am resolved.”

The quadrille was over, and the dancers were dispersing ; two gentlemen crossed the room, and joined Lord Morlif and Mr. Gwynne, entering into an animated discussion upon politics. Meanwhile Gertrude, overpowered with the attentions she received on all sides, was delighted to escape with Anarawd into the garden.

“ You will, I hope, not catch cold,” said Anarawd, the moment he had carefully wrapped his companion in a cloak. Let us sit here, under the old elm-tree ; it will be pleasant and refreshing.”

“ Yes, it is delightful to get away from the noise and dazzling lights ; I am weary of dancing already. I should never do to go through a London season ; I should die of *ennui* in the halls of gaiety and dissipation. I have repeatedly wished myself at home this evening, when I was not dancing with you. What stupid, uninteresting men there are in the world ! I have been bored to death with my partners. That Captain Sands—that *soi-disant* Captain, as you call him—is so eaten up with vanity, he is positively half an idiot. Don’t let me dance with him again, pray. Rupert Morlif, too, is another simpleton. I wonder how half the world finds pleasure in this sort of life ; I would rather seek amusement from other sources.”

“ So would I, Gertrude ; there is no real pleasure to be found in a life of dissipation. I am convinced we must look for something higher and better—something that will bring us more lasting satisfaction. What contents the mass will not content you nor me, I am certain ; so we shall do to run through life together, for we will not live without an aim.”

“ I hope not.” She gave a heavy sigh.

“ Why did you sigh, Gertrude, and shrink from me in that way ? Tell me your thoughts ; tell me without any concealment.”

“ They travelled far away just then. If papa could see me sitting here with you, what would he say ? There would be no smile upon his face, I know there would not. I dread the future. I am a coward at heart, Anarawd. I wish he had never left me.”

“ You don't place sufficient confidence in me.”

“ Yes, dear Anarawd, I do.”

“ No, Gertrude : the confidence I would

have you place in me should exclude fear or apprehension."

"It does not do that; oh no."

"I regret that—why not repose all your trust in me? We shall never be happy unless it is so."

"Don't speak so despondingly. I do place my whole trust in you, but you do not hold my destiny in your hands. If ill fortune is marked out for my lot, you will not be able to smooth my path, though you may earnestly desire it."

"You call up imaginary evils; you should not do so. What an excitable person you are, Gertrude! Your fingers are trembling: you are a mystery; women are a mystery."

"Why a mystery? The general view man takes of woman is, that she is open and confiding, watchful over the charge committed to her care, and an upholder of her husband, let him be saint or sinner."

"Ah, yes; so far may be true; still she is a mystery."

“ Well, then I am an admirable study for you,” said Gertrude, laughing; “ a little bundle of contradictions, just at present. But listen to what I have to say. When I am your wife, you will awake out of a dream, and discover I am no mystery, but a mere piece of machinery in the hands of her lord and master; a little working automaton, that grows ugly, and worn with age, but under all carries a heart as bright and as joyous as a May-day, so long as her lord and master’s love does not diminish a hair’s-breadth.”

“ That never will be, Gertrude—never.”

“ Not a hair’s-breadth? You don’t know how soon you may get tired of me.”

“ My love for you, my dear Gertrude, is too deeply woven with myself ever to lessen or change, and you know it. Yet you have not confidence in me!”

She placed her lips to his — “ I have— why will you not believe me? It lies here,

deep as a well, if you could only probe my heart."

"Gertrude, how is it you possess this faculty—this wheedling mode of putting one into good humour, and extracting a smile out of a frown? It would be impossible to feel displeased for many minutes together; it is a happy gift, which few possess."

"Love, I suppose it is love, which softens the heart and the tongue, and changes bitter to sweet, making life often run smoothly when it would be otherwise rough. What a dreary waste the world would be without love! Imagine hate ruling in its place. What demons we should become!"

"We have too much of it now; the world is bad enough. Are you cold?"

"No; only I never know how time goes when we are together. Do you think we have been here long? I hope it will not be noticed."

"I am afraid we have. Pleasant as it is, we must return into the gay scene. My

mother, perhaps, may want me; I must not neglect her."

"No, no, come at once. Dear, kind Lady Elizabeth is so good to me, too; I hope we shall not bring her into trouble," whispered Gertrude.

"I hope not; it would grieve me to see her suffer on my account."

They crossed the lawn, and entering the dancing-room, Lord Morlif met them at the door. He immediately requested the pleasure of leading Gertrude through the next quadrille. He would have no refusal, and Anarawd, with some reluctance, gave her up. In leaving them to go to his mother, he heard Lord Morlif say—

"Not another word in our vulgar mother tongue; let us have nothing but Italian."

Many curious eyes were turned upon Gertrude, as she stood in a conspicuous part of the room, speaking to Lord Morlif in a foreign tongue. Some envied her, others pitied her, and many inquired who

she was. One among the crowd, a gentleman from an adjoining county, asked Mr. Cad Maurice, the son of the antiquary, if the young lady was a relation of the Gwynnes, as he had seen her come into the room with Lady Elizabeth, and she had an aristocratic air.

“ Oh, no, she is no connection of theirs ; she is Miss Lewis of Clogwyn.”

“ What ! Miss Lewis who drives those beautiful ponies, and rides so well ?”

“ The same.”

“ So, that’s she ? I admire her far more than those dashy, flaunting Miss Morlifs ; with all their style, they are not so lady-like, nor have they that sweet expression. She is a charming little thing ; there is not one in the room so taking ; something far more than pretty.”

“ I agree with you, that in calling her a pretty girl we should not do her justice.”

“ I pity her, poor girl, that she should

be standing there, listening to that man's dangerous tongue."

"Do you know Captain Lewis?"

"I know him by sight; not personally."

"Were he here to-night, I feel sure he would not approve of his daughter's being in company with Lord Morlif."

"No father would, he is a thorough *roué*. He led a most immoral life when he was down in this part of the country before, and was cut by all the families in the neighbourhood: that, now, seems to be forgotten. I wonder at Mr. Gwynne's inviting so notorious a character to his house."

"I wonder at nothing in these days, when we only look at home, and consider the number of strange events that take place in our small watering-places. An odd set infests these neighbourhoods sometimes; yet we manage to discover who is, and who is not presentable. They imagine they can live here *incog.*, but find they are mistaken."

“ It becomes necessary we should be particular; although my friend Mr. Gwynne does not seem to be of that opinion. I see two young men here, named ‘ Sands.’ They have been some time in our neighbourhood, kicking up the dust, and trying to make the people believe they are somebody, when they are really nothing. The eldest gave it out that he was heir to a large property, and his brother a captain in Her Majesty’s service. The latter is no more a captain than I am, nor his brother an heir; it is all mystification. They are two scampish adventurers, and nothing more.”

“ Likely as not: Mr. Gwynne knows nothing about them. They are good dancers, and he probably thought they would be an acquisition on the present occasion.”

“ It may be so: we too often cut a ridiculous figure in this part of the country. Only imagine Mr. Gwynne, in his exalted position, picking up two such rascally fellows as those, and loading them with attentions!

It is absurd. I understand they dined here yesterday, and are to join a riding-party which is to come off to-morrow at twelve. That such a proud man as Mr. Gwynne should do so is the more surprising."

"It is not like him : giving this ball is something novel also. If I have an opportunity, I will name what you say to his son, and put them on their guard."

"You had better not meddle with the great folks ; for attempting to do an aristocrat a service, is like putting your finger into a hornet's nest : they won't be interfered with."

"Ah ! but I know his son intimately ; I have known him from a child, when he used to go flying over the fences in the field, doing one's heart good to see him : he won't be offended with anything I shall have to communicate, but take it as it is intended. He does not in the least resemble his father, either in person or character."

"Well, you know best. I make it a rule to avoid the magnates, particularly such a

man as Mr. Gwynne, and that esteemed friend of his, who thrives and prospers through all his evil courses. It is clear those aristocratical, influential men may pass life as they please; moral or immoral, that is never taken into consideration. They are received into society precisely the same. If they are acknowledged in their own circles, what can we do, but shut our eyes and remain dumb? This, I fear, will always be the case, as long as the laws of society make it an offence to tell truth of noble and wealthy men. Public censure, indeed, may do good sometimes, when it comes home to a man's conscience. Why should vice be overlooked in one class of society any more than in another? Why should any be privileged? We live in a land styled one of freedom!"

"We don't desire the privilege of exemption in the middle classes. We stand in a better position without it, since it enables us to prove there is more virtue to be found in our class than in theirs. As for myself, I

would rather be an honest man at the plough, than a dissipated aristocrat surrounded by his parasites and living in voluptuousness."

"I, too, should be sorry to see our moral position changed: the day of reckoning will surely come."

At that moment, the band struck up a lively quadrille from one of the popular operas. Mr. Cad Maurice and his companion moved away to make room for the dancers; while Anarawd Gwynne appeared among the crowd, watching Gertrude at a little distance.

"What! not dancing again? Why, you are the slowest, inexcitable fellow I ever came across!" was the exclamation which roused our hero from a reverie. On turning round, his eyes fell upon Rupert Morlif, with a young lady on his arm. "Why, Gwynne, what can you be made of, to resist this fizzing quadrille? It goes right through one! Come this way; a young lady is dying to dance with the heir of Bleddyn. We are in want of a *vis-à-vis*: pray oblige us. *Entre*

nous, you must excuse me," continued Rupert, whispering aside: "for your own sake, don't be standing here looking like a bronze figure, to be admired solely as a piece of art. As the heir and master of the ceremonies, you ought to be taking an active part in the evening's amusements."

Anarawd drew himself up—"Thank you, it is considerate of you, but I must decline the honour. If you are in want of a partner for the young lady, there are a heap of loungers at the door, who will be glad to get an introduction."

Rupert shrugged his shoulders, and had the sense to see it was no use arguing the point; so he hurried away to do as he had been recommended.

A few minutes later, Anarawd was standing near his mother.

"You look fatigued; is there anything I can get you, mother? a glass of wine, or an ice?"

"I am not able to keep up as I used to

do. I am tired ; and an ice would, perhaps, refresh me."

" Remain here, and I will fetch one in a few minutes." He disappeared amongst the crowd.

When he returned, and Lady Elizabeth received the ice from his hand, she said, rather anxiously—

" Now go, my dear, and see after Gertrude, and bring her to me. The quadrille is over ; and it is as well she should not be with Lord Morlif."

Anarawd paced the room two or three times in hopes of encountering the couple he was in search of, but was unsuccessful. They were at the time in the greenhouse, carrying on the following conversation :—

" You say you are very fond of a green house ?"

" Yes, extremely," replied Gertrude.

" Have you one at home ?"

" Oh yes, we have several : papa could

not exist without his exotic plants ; he takes great interest in them."

" Not exist without his exotic plants ! I should never have thought it, from what I have heard of him : a man who has lived so much upon the salt water !" He laughed.

Gertrude coloured, and was a little puzzled at his manner. " I don't see why he should not for that reason appreciate them all the better. No one knows dear papa, or is ready to do him justice. *He*, however, loses little by it, and the world a great deal."

" A very pretty speech, most flattering to him, I am sure. I should like to see your greenhouses, and the great display of taste which I am told is everywhere to be found at Clogwyn. I was never there. I shall come some day to pay you a visit ; seeing is believing. I shall then, perhaps, do your father more justice."

" Yes, I am sure you will," replied Gertrude, in her artless, hearty manner, and looking up at him as she spoke. There was

a peculiar sharp expression in Lord Morlif's eyes, which, if they did not embarrass her, always left a disagreeable impression. She was glad to turn away from him, and for a few minutes stood to admire an exotic shrub.

“Allow me, Miss Lewis, to present you with these camellias, and give me those withered flowers in exchange,” said her companion, holding the spray in his hand: “these are emblems of yourself. What! not take them?”

“No, I am sorry, my lord; why were you in such haste? That very cluster Lady Elizabeth was admiring this afternoon. I cannot accept them, nor part with these faded flowers.”

“Oh, impossible! that miserable bit of heath! You cannot wear it any longer; do oblige me?”

“No, thank you. Withered as they are, it does not matter. I am tired and faded, like the flowers. We shall soon retire from

these hot rooms together, and be revived before the morning."

As she spoke, she placed her hand before the faded heath, and stepped backwards, as if she dreaded Lord Morlif would take it without her permission.

"There, now, my dear young lady, see what you have done,—torn your dress with that cactus! Had you obliged me in accepting the flowers, this would not have happened."

Gertrude stooped in an instant to disentangle the flounces of her dress from the prickly plant, and in her haste her finger came in contact with one of its great thorns. When she drew her hand away, she was startled to find her glove and handkerchief covered with blood.

"Pray do not be alarmed," said Lord Morlif, putting down the flowers, and hastening to her assistance: "it is but a chapter of accidents."

"The thorn has gone deep," said Ger-

trude, examining the wound. "Allow me to pass: I had better wash my finger in the fountain."

Lord Morlif followed her to the end of the conservatory.

"Does it pain you?"

"Yes, it was sharp at first. I wish it would not bleed so."

"It is better it should do so. There is poison in the cactus: now let me look at the wound—I can easily bind it up for you."

With the greatest confidence Gertrude gave him her hand.

"It is quite a gash. To think of this delicate hand being so ill-treated! What a barbarous thorn!"

Before the unsuspecting girl could guess his manœuvre, he raised her hand and pressed it to his lips.

With an expression of great indignation, Gertrude drew her hand from him, and a deep blush mantled in her face. At the

same instant, hearing a footstep from behind, she turned round and encountered Anarawd.

“ I am glad you are here. Don't look startled ; I have only run a thorn into my finger, and want you to take me to Margaret now directly, that I may get it bound up.”

With a very serious air, Anarawd drew her arm within his own, but did not open his lips.

“ There is no occasion to go so far for assistance ; I can bind it up for you in a very few minutes,” said Lord Morlif, approaching and tearing off a strip from his cambric handkerchief.

“ No, thank you,” said Gertrude, in a quiet but decided tone. “ I prefer going with Mr. Gwynne to Lady Elizabeth's maid. She will furnish me with a fresh handkerchief and gloves.”

“ Then you will not accept my good offices ? Not very grateful of you, Miss Lewis.”

“ I am sorry it should so happen. Having no confidence in you, my lord, it is only what you might expect.”

Bowing coolly, she hurried away with Anarawd.

“ They understand each other, there is not the smallest doubt. Gwynne is as blind as a bat, like most fathers in these affairs. Taking it into his head that his son has no susceptibility! no susceptibility!”

“ What! you, my lord, here all alone, soliloquizing among the green leaves and flowers, with a handkerchief torn into ribands, and flowers strewed upon the ground! What has happened?”

Mr. Gwynne had entered by a side door, and thus accosted Lord Morlif, shrugging up his own shoulders at the same time and laughing.

“ Nothing of vital importance. I have only been ill-treated by the blond beauty, and I am a little jealous of your son,—that’s all.”

“ My son! What do you mean, my lord?”

Don't speak quite so loud; we shall be overheard."

"Why, I told you a short time ago he was paying Miss Lewis a great deal of attention. The sooner you get rid of the idea of your son having no susceptibility, the better."

Mr. Gwynne put his arm within Lord Morlif's, and leaving the greenhouse, passed on to the refreshment-room, where they sat down and ordered champagne and sherry.

An hour later, Mr. Gwynne was standing near the ball-room door, with his face flushed and the tone of his voice sounding unusually high, when his son crossed the room and approached with Gertrude leaning on his arm. She had just taken leave of Lady Elizabeth, and Anarawd was conducting her to her carriage.

"Are you going, Miss Lewis—going?" repeated Mr. Gwynne, staggering forward in an unbecoming manner, his articulation so thick it was difficult to understand what he said.

“ Yes, it is late,” replied Gertrude, offering him her hand, and in a confused and hurried manner she wished him good-night.

“ Stay ; I par—par—particularly wish to speak to you. Allow me a few, few, a—a little conversation. Your—your father was a—a fool, a fool for coming here. I—I—I would——”

“ I am afraid my carriage stops the way ; I must say good-night,” interrupted Gertrude, growing alarmed as her eyes rested on the drunken countenance of the speaker. “ Excuse me.”

Anarawd drew her away without speaking. His face gradually paled till it became perfectly livid, and his lips and cheeks were of the same colour. Gertrude looked distressed, and pressed his hand affectionately.

“ Pray don't mind about it, dear Anarawd,” she whispered, while he fastened her cloak about her person. “ My sympathy for you will be all the stronger ; I shall go home and think of you with new feelings.”

As he stood lingering at the half-closed carriage-door conversing with her, he seemed to regain his spirits.

“Remember, I shall come for you at half-past eleven, and expect to find you ready. One favour I have to ask before I wish you good-night : will you oblige me by not riding Nanny to-morrow ? She is so ungovernable in company. Will you oblige me ?”

“If you wish it ; but you know I am used to Nanny’s pranks ; she does not alarm me in the least.”

“Well, that may be ; I would rather you did not mount her on this occasion.”

“Very well, I shall be ready. Good-night.”

The carriage-door closed ; and as the vehicle rolled away, Anarawd sprang up the steps, and on entering the hall, came in contact with his father.

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Gwynne, with his inflamed eyes staring into his son’s face ; “so this is the state of affairs, is it ? A conspiracy ; a conspiracy, sir, carried on in my

own house, and your foolish mother at the head of it! I—I—I will soon put a stop to it. He was a fool for coming into this neighbourhood; and your mother is a fool—a fool!”

“My dear sir, this is not the time to speak of these things: another day, when we are alone.”

He drew his father's attention to the company that were flocking into the hall, preparing to leave the house; and Mr. Gwynne had sufficient sense left to see his son was right, and he became silent.

Anarawd escaped to his study, and was thankful to find himself once more unmolested.

CHAPTER XI.

GERTRUDE was sitting in the garden in her habit, with her hat lying by her side, when Anarawd rode up, and dismounting, crossed the lawn and addressed her :—

“ Is it not a heavenly morning? I am glad to find you are ready, and, as I wished, we have a quarter of an hour to spare. You look as fresh as if you had had a double allowance of beauty’s sleep last night, instead of sitting up so late as you did. Are you fully equal to a long ride?”

“ I think so. The air is delicious ; it will be no punishment to be out the whole day.

But, my dear Anarawd, how is Lady Elizabeth? I was grieved to see her looking so fatigued last night : a lover of repose as she is, and so necessary as rest is to her, it must have been a trial to her to sit out the entire evening."

"Yes, the slightest excitement fatigues her. When we met at breakfast, I observed she was looking pale and out of spirits. It is a marvel to me she can ever be in good spirits. I never remember her so cheerful as when we three spent our evenings together. I know, Gertrude, she loves you dearly, and at her heart rejoices I have chosen you out of the world ; but she is fearful lest our hopes should be blighted."

"Our attachment is mutual. I loved her for her own sake before I cared for you, and now I doubly love her."

"She merits the love of all, for there are few who resemble her in the world. Yet, strange to say, some do not appreciate her."

"That should not distress you ; we know

her worth and possess her love. But you, too, are out of spirits."

"I ought not to be so, on such a lovely morning as this, in your company. I am not, in truth, in good spirits enough to desire to join the noisy cavalcade; I wish we could take one of our own quiet rides."

"I wish, indeed, we could. Is Mr Gwynne going?"

"I don't know: I did not see him this morning. I met the young Sands as I came through our gates. They are to be of the party. I can't think how my father, just to please Miss Mary Morlif, could ask those two scamps to our house. What do you think of those delectable young ladies? you surely don't admire them?"

"Oh, no. I should shrink from their companionship. I did not see any one in the room that I would desire for a friend."

"My mother would say you are too particular, as she says of me; that you ought to

be more sociable ; that it is the duty of all to try and discover what good there is in others, and to spare their feelings.”

“ Yes, but she is so exceedingly benevolent : my ambition is to be like her, but I fear I never shall attain to her excellence. I find it extremely difficult to be sociable when I am with those with whom I feel I have no congeniality of sentiments. I draw back, retire within myself, and refrain from intercourse with them. When that is the case, I can be coldly polite, but never sociable.”

Anarawd said he had often experienced the same feelings ; but they must learn to sacrifice their feelings, if duty stood in the way.

“ There is no duty attached to my being sociable to strangers, and I am contented and happy at possessing the love of three in the world. There is no room in my heart for more ; for those it is full to overflowing. I thought once it would be impossible to love

any one but my father. I shall never learn to know myself."

"We ought, Gertrude, to take a certain interest in all our fellow-creatures, and be ready to live for them as well as ourselves. We must guard against our love growing selfish, and be careful we do not deteriorate."

"Oh, no! I hope not to deteriorate, but I fear love is selfish."

"Another of those mournful expressions, Gertrude. I can guess your thoughts."

"There will be a hard battle between you and papa; and when you carry off your trophy, I shall perhaps fail in making you a good wife."

"I have no fear; I know what you are capable of being."

"It is greatly to your detriment having so exalted an opinion of me. You will some day be disappointed. Think how painfully mortifying that would be to me; do not be so blind to my faults—pray do not."

"Before I have to search for your faults, I

shall have to school myself into perfection. What book is this you have been reading?"

"Curiosity is strongly developed in your character. You must always know what I have been reading. Not a trashy novel today, not one to excite your ire or your sarcasm, dear Anarawd."

"Dante, the great Dante. I have not had my Italian lesson lately. Is there a chance, Gertrude, of my ever mastering the language?"

"If you were a little more industrious, there is every hope."

"Do you remember your first impression of me, that I was an ignorant savage?"

"No, no, that is too strong language."

"You certainly fostered an idea that I had no taste for literature; that I could see no amusement, nor think of anything but shooting, fishing and boating."

"When I first visited Bleddyn, you did

little else. You should not blame me if I had that impression."

"You were not aware then what kind of life I had been leading in London, and how thankful I was to get back to the mountains, and to enjoy again a life of freedom. But we understand each other better now. We have ceased to give way to our fancies, to doubt and to quarrel. We are satisfied our tastes and principles agree, that there is that affinity that is so necessary for the peace of both."

"You say all this, Anarawd, and yet you look unhappy. I am afraid your father has been angry with you. It is only what I might expect from his manner to me last night."

"He did not know what he was saying, Gertrude; let nothing he says have weight. Do not think any more of what passed last night."

"No, no, it was not kind of me to remind you. Believe me, I returned home sorely grieved for you."

“Do not allude to it.”

“Only tell me if he spoke to you after I left.”

“He did; and by some means he has discovered our attachment, and was anything but gracious; but it will pass off, I hope.”

Gertrude's fears were awakened, and he had some difficulty in soothing her. More than half an hour elapsed, when Anarawd started to his feet and exclaimed—

“They will be waiting for us; let us go. Here is your hat; let me hold your whip; and do not, my dearest, look unhappy. Will Dante be safe here?”

“Oh yes, there is no fear of rain to-day.” They beckoned to the groom, and mounted.

When they came in sight of Bleddyn, a busy, lively scene presented itself. Grooms and attendants were running in all directions, and various sounds of merriment burst upon the ear. Some of the equestrians were mounted, waiting patiently in the shade; others were arranging their friends

in the carriages, and settling where and at what hour the party were to meet. There were disputes, too: dowagers were apprehensive lest they should be kept waiting for their dinner, not approving the equestrians going a different road from that taken by the carriages. There was the same indecision in packing the prog. In making and unmaking their plans, a whole hour was wasted. Rupert Morlif was dancing attendance on the young ladies, and Captain Sands was carrying on a double flirtation with Miss Mary Morlif and the banker's pretty daughter.

On Anarawd and Gertrude approaching, Lord Morlif and Mr Sands, in light summer attire, separated from the rest of the party to meet them.

“ Good morning ; we are glad to see you,” was Lord Morlif's salutation. “ We began to think you were going to play truant and leave us in the lurch. We all know how dangerous it is for a young man to be under

the influence of a pretty woman, and were seriously under the apprehension that the magnetical attraction at Clogwyn might inconvenience the party. Time, you know, was stealing on."

"I was not aware it was so much after the hour of appointment," said young Gwynne, taking out his watch with a look of supreme indifference. "At all events, I have not kept you waiting, for I see the party are not now nearly ready."

"Yes, yes, you are in excellent time," rejoined Mr. Sands with a broad grin. "I don't believe they will be ready for this half-hour or more; they are still so undecided."

"If we are not off soon, there will not be time to go the long round and eat our dinner in comfort; we shall perhaps have to dispense with the meal altogether."

"Then let us by all means set off; let us hurry them. I should be sorry to go without my dinner. This country makes me so confoundedly hungry, that I am in a

half-famishing state from an hour after breakfast till my legs are under the mahogany, every day in the week. I have just been trying your porter, Mr. Gwynne; and very fine it is—quite as good as you can get in any of the first club-houses in London. At my request, an extra half-dozen has been tucked up in the prog-baskets. I shan't object, if there should be no demand for them, to drink the six long-necked bottles myself. There is every excuse for us poor thirsty devils in this glorious hot weather. The ladies, too, have not been forgotten. Your butler is a famous man for this sort of thing; he has taken care there should be iced champagne in abundance, and all else a man of taste could desire."

"There will be no lack of provisions, I see, to judge from the piles of baskets we observe there," remarked Lord Morlif: "there is enough for ourselves and all the pauper herd in the neighbourhood besides; so one might imagine."

“ Better to have an over-abundance than too little at any time. I hate a scanty allowance, quite as much as I did when I was a small boy, perched upon a form, peering into an empty pie-dish and longing for more. We shall do justice to the good things. The ladies, too, I hope, will help us, and not be shocked at our voracious appetites.”

Gertrude was glad when they had passed through the assemblage crowded in front of the mansion, and reached the spot where Lady Elizabeth was sitting in the shade.

“ Is my father going ?” inquired Anarawd the moment he had dismounted and approached his mother.

“ No, my dear, he is not out of bed ; he complains much of his head this morning.”

“ You are mounted so high, it is impossible to hold any conversation with you, my dear Gertrude,” continued Lady Elizabeth, venturing a little nearer to the lively animal on which she was seated. “ I hope you are

not over-exerting yourself in joining the ride after the dancing last night."

"No, I think the ride will refresh me; I am strong enough. On the other hand, I wish I could see you looking better; I am afraid it is you who are feeling the effects of last night."

The conversation was interrupted by some of the party coming up to wish Lady Elizabeth good morning. They were going to start at last. They then all moved off. Anarawd and Gertrude lingered.

"Try and get a little rest, mother, while we are away."

"And will you come and spend a quiet morning with me at Clogwyn to-morrow? You know what repose is to be found there. Do come."

"Yes, my dear. I want to talk to you; I will come if I can."

Kissing his mother, Anarawd mounted, and in a few seconds was following the cavalcade.

Lady Elizabeth stood looking wistfully after the party, and watched them out of sight. She then sank upon the seat and sighed heavily. Her pale face grew paler, and with a mournful shake of the head she murmured—

“Blight, that comes upon the heart later in life, is bitter enough. Who would not struggle to avert it from youth?”

Leaving Lady Elizabeth to her sombre reflections, we follow the picnic party—or rather the riders—for some distance after they left the gates of Bleddyn. The road lay at the foot of the hills, shaded by trees that made it more agreeable to the merry equestrians. Lord Morlif said and did little but devote himself to the ladies. He was frequently observed whispering a compliment in Italian to Gertrude, and quizzing most unmercifully those ladies whom he did not admire. Thus an hour had passed away, when, on suddenly turning a corner, a full view of the sea burst upon them.

“ Now for a gallop upon the sands,” said Anarawd, stopping before a gate which opened upon a path leading down a declivity. “ You must not mind a little loose sand and rough riding for a quarter of a mile. Follow me ; there is no real danger, steep as it is. When you get upon the level, you had better let me still be your guide, or we may be buried in a quicksand.”

“ Really, Mr. Gwynne, it is impossible ; we can't take our horses down that path,” said two or three voices ; “ it is a precipice.”

“ And I have a horror of quicksands. Do, pray, Mr Gwynne, let us keep on the high road,” cried Mary Morlif with a look of terror. “ How can you think of taking us into such a frightful place as this ! We shall be sure to meet with an accident.”

Anarawd Gwynne was beyond hearing. Rupert Morlif and Captain Sands were highly entertained at the trepidation into which the ladies were thrown.

There is no turning back now ; we must

go on. Why, Miss Lewis has nearly reached the bottom. See how well she manages her horse, and how courageous she is!—a pattern to you all,” said Rupert Morlif.

“Miss Lewis is accustomed to this country, and knows all its horrors,” said Mary Morlif, looking as if she were ready to burst into tears. “Besides, she is under the special care of our guide, who appears so occupied with her that he is no guide to any of the rest of the party; so we cannot be worse off.”

“It is no use your grumbling in this way. Do, Mary, try and get on,” said her brother, impatiently.

“Just to go into those quicksands? I can’t.”

“Nonsense! We have only to follow Gwynne. It is safe enough.”

The young men continued laughing and talking in such an absurd manner, that it helped to put the timid into better spirits. The moment they cleared the sandbank

and great stones, their past perils were no longer remembered. In reference to the quicksands, the danger, as is generally the case, was greater in anticipation than reality. When once upon *terra firma*, the whole party enjoyed a gallop upon the hard sands, and felt refreshed by the sea-breeze. As they continued, thousands of sea-gulls hovered overhead, and numbers were continually flying or settling upon a peninsula of sand extending some distance into the sea. They were screaming and keeping up such a noise, that it was impossible not to notice them. Trading-vessels and herring-boats, with their sails reflected beneath, might be seen appearing and disappearing alternately upon the horizon line. This was so clear that the South Wales coast could be distinguished, reaching far away until it dwindled to a thread upon the ocean. What made the landscape still more striking and beautiful, were those peculiarly rich and varied tints upon the near and distant mountains, that

seemed borrowed from the clouds partially resting on and floating over them far into the distance. These operated as friendly shields to keep off the scorching rays of the sun from their lofty peaks. So delightful was the scene, that the party lingered long to admire it; and, for the first time since they had started from Bleddyn, conversation flagged.

With sharpened appetites they quitted the beach at last, and traversing a mountain-path for some distance, reached the spot which had been fixed upon for the picnic. The company in part was already assembled there, and waiting with impatience to sit down to a rural repast, served upon a large stone in place of a table.

The young ladies made there toilet at a brook, and then had places allotted to them. Plates were handed from one to another; servants bustled from side to side, doing little or nothing, and often coming in collision with each other, while staring at the gentlemen who assumed to officiate

in their stead, displaying still greater stupidity by mislaying the articles constantly in use. Some had to go without mustard, and some without salt; it mattered little. No one seemed inclined to find fault. The name of a picnic seemed to carry with it a charm. Every one did as he liked, eating and drinking in whatever form or fashion the humour of the moment directed. No one thought of impropriety or vulgarity. If a lady held a wing of a chicken between her fingers, or a gentleman ran about with a leg of lamb as a trophy, or drank out of a bottle, it was hailed as a charming novelty, and no more.

Every face seemed beaming with good temper. It is possible there were many there who seldom enjoyed a meal with greater gusto than upon that occasion. Quiet and noisy flirtations were kept up as briskly as the consumption of food. Captain Sands sat between the rival ladies, drinking the health of both in a bumper of sparkling

hock before a morsel had passed his lips. Judging from the general aspect of affairs in regard to the younger members of the party, there was no drawback to enjoyment. Still, there are doubts whether the grave, thin-lipped banker, sitting in an uncomfortable and cramped position by the side of his good-humoured plethoric wife, would not have preferred his glass of port in his snug dining-room at home. Perhaps, too, the care-worn, pale lady, sitting at his right hand, the victim of a noisy, rackety husband, constantly helping himself out of a black bottle, would as gladly have escaped, and saved herself the annoyance of witnessing, before the evening was over, a husband in a state of total forgetfulness of himself and the company.

The most contented-looking of the party was Mr. Cadwalader Maurice, the son of the antiquary. He was a small, spare man, with an open countenance beaming with intelligence and benevolence. He was never

known to hesitate, to prevaricate, or to speak ill of his neighbours; he was a general favourite with all, and at a picnic he was indispensable. If any one fell into a bog, stumbled over a hedge, or were involved in any difficulty, he was sure to be the first to render assistance. From principle, he showed more attention to the plain girls than to those more favoured by nature, and was the peacemaker in the neighbourhood. He had a peculiar fancy for teaching little boys to ride, and make men of them, as he denominated it. Anarawd Gwynne had been one of his first pupils, and he had reason to be proud of him. They had afterwards been excellent friends. The Maurices were the only resident family, near, with whom the young heir was particularly intimate. The patriarch of the family, it will be remembered, possessed great influence over Anarawd's mind in early youth, and time did not diminish his respect for him. He often visited him, and followed his advice,

as he had been accustomed to do when a child.

They were a happy, picturesque-looking group, a good subject for an artist's pencil, as they sat under the shadow of an overhanging rock, Snowdon towering in the distance, surrounded by her aspiring compeers. A soft haze was stealing over the summit; rich tints, ever and anon, rose and disappeared, as the rays of the setting sun glanced obliquely upon the lower hills, and tipped with gold the foliage of the forest-trees in the valleys beneath. The party had removed to a little distance from the rustic table; some were lounging on the heath, and several of the young ladies, at the request of the gentlemen, were singing native melodies. In addition to the rural character of the scene, a number of ragged, bare-legged children had scrambled down over the cliff, not far from their homes, and stood gazing in silent wonderment at the grand ladies and gentlemen, as if they had

belonged to another species of humanity. A few of the more timid were peeping from behind large stones, occasionally coming forward to share, with their more venturesome comrades, the tempting food flung to them by the servants. It was a golden harvest to them ; their little faces beamed with joy as they pocketed or devoured hurriedly morsels, to them so delicious, again springing forward for a fresh supply. Old women, with coloured handkerchiefs thrown across their full-bordered caps, hovered round, their arms full of knitted stockings, in hopes of finding purchasers. Two or three old men, in earlier years adroit fishermen, drew near, speaking a little broken English, and volunteering to show the gentlemen where the large fish haunted ; reminding them, too, that if they were in want of flies, they had them of first-rate quality for sale. Some of the gentlemen, amused at the quaint ways of these old codgers, examined their flies, and strolled, without their hats,

down to the river's edge. To complete the rural encampment, the horses and ponies, without either saddle or bridle, were grazing in a small enclosure, and, by their antics, were enjoying the sweet pasture of the quiet mountain.

To the reflective and to artists, it was a scene to be enjoyed more in the perspective than in the foreground. Some of the party were of this opinion, Anarawd and Gertrude among the rest. They had sauntered in an opposite direction from the party, and selected a seat where they could have a good view of the entire scene, and yet remain beyond reach of the confusion of voices, and the intrusion of the ignorant and officious. It was as novel a scene to Gertrude as the previous ball had been; but, though at first amused, she soon grew weary of it.

“Cannot we go home before they go?” she inquired, putting up her sketch-book. “Lord Morlif, his daughters, and all your

visitors, appear to be most condescending to the others of the party, and to be much entertained; you will not be missed. Shall we go?"

"I shall be delighted; for, somehow, this sort of amusement does not suit me any more than yourself. We shall neither of us be sorry when the day is over."

They accordingly went off in a contrary direction, in which they hoped to find the servants, and met Cad Maurice, who, with his usual good-nature, offered to go in search of the groom, and recommended having their horses brought to the lower gate, from whence they might start unobserved by the rest of the party.

Soon afterwards, in his company, they scrambled down a steep bank, and reached the spot where they found their horses ready, mounted, and were soon on their way to Clogwyn, leaving the rest of the party to follow when so inclined.

CHAPTER XII.

A FORTNIGHT passed. Lord Morlif and his family had left Bleddyn, and were settled for the summer and autumn at Bryn-y-Coed.

Anarawd Gwynne had been walking with his mother in the garden, and was pacing the veranda, endeavouring to compose his mind after he had been unfolding to her his future hopes. She had told him of his father's strong objection to the union between the two families, and how anxious she was about them. His mother's sympathizing voice was yet in his ears, and the warm pressure of her hand was still felt,

when a servant appeared, and said to Anarawd—

“ My master wishes to see you, sir, in his study.”

“ Very well, Williams; all right. I will be there in a few minutes.”

“ Mills, sir, wants to know what time you think you will require your horse: he has been saddled a long while.”

“ How stupid of me! I forgot to give a counter-order. Tell Mills I shall not require him to-night.”

Anarawd was again alone, with a mind more disturbed than before; and with a slow step he took another turn, and then stood at the end of the veranda, looking up at the giant crag which towered above the trees, and in the twilight haze which hung upon the summit had a more majestic and gigantic appearance than usual.

His heart throbbed. Was he a coward? did he dread the interview?—was he, then, afraid of him for whom he had never

experienced the smallest fear? Not at all. There was creeping over his heart an apprehension lest, through his father's determination to oppose him, he might lose Gertrude, the dearest tie on earth. Lord Morlif had been closeted with his father all the morning, and no good could come from such an interview. The influence his lordship had over him (Mr. Gwynne) was great, and he had probably proved a secret enemy.

Endeavouring to shake off these reflections, he entered the house, and proceeded to the study.

“Procrastination is always bad,” said Mr. Gwynne, addressing his son the moment he came into his presence. “It is to be regretted there has been so much of it in relation to this absurd engagement between you and Miss Lewis. I am desirous, sir, to let you know at once what my opinions are upon the subject, and to point out to you the extreme folly of your conduct. Is

your pride extinguished? Is all correct feeling departed, sir, that you think of offering your hand to a young lady so much beneath you?—that young lady, too, a daughter of a man whom I loathe and detest? Of a family connection with that man how could you ever dream? I would rather see you incarcerated in the county gaol, with a halter about your neck, than married to a daughter of that dogmatical, upstart Lewis—a man of no reputation. What a low-lived mind you must have, or be a perfect Simon Pure, to commit your family name, your respectability, the merit and lustre of your family inheritance, as you have done!”

Mr. Gwynne grew more excited as he spoke, and struck the table two or three times violently with his hand, while ire flashed from his eyes.

Lady Elizabeth, who was sitting upon the sofa pale and trembling, rose and approached :—

“ You promised me you would not lose your temper. I entreat you to compose yourself. Have some consideration for his feelings : losing control over yourself, you only make matters worse.”

“ You are right, madam ; to be able to have command over oneself is a material advantage, a radical virtue, beyond doubt. Go back to your seat. I will have no interference ; I am not a man of many words, and we shall soon settle affairs.” He then resumed his address to his son :—

“ Miss Lewis, I am ready to admit, is a pretty bauble. There could be no objection to making a plaything of her ; but to make her a wife—the wife of the heir of Bleddyn, that is a different thing—that shall never be. This hand, sir, shall first disinherit you. A Lewis, indeed, share the wealth and honour of our noble house ! I swear solemnly it never shall be. Rank, sir, rank is what you should seek. We don't want meek-eyed

maidens with sanctified purity, but blood, blood and position—that is the point.”

He glared at his son as if he expected some reply, or some demonstration of his feelings. Anarawd stood still and silent.

“ Well, sir, I hope you see the necessity nay, the duty you owe your family ; you must break off this connection at once. You do not still intend to be such a blind fool as to stand in the way of your own interest ? ”

“ I cannot, sir, behave dishonourably to Gertrude Lewis. I cannot for mere interest’s sake give her up. I have pledged myself—that pledge is sacred.”

“ Sacred ! Jove take your sacred pledges ! What, sir ! Hear me ! ” He raised his voice. “ Hear me, sir ! I swear again, that the moment you link your fate with that young lady, you are disinherited ; you are cut off from all but your ancient family estate ; not a tittle of my property is yours ! Ay, cut off from all my large funded and personal

property, and the estates I have purchased. I will cut you off, sir, with a shilling. I am thankful to say it is in my power to do so. Your gentle mother may plead for you, and you may plead for yourself, sir; and the world may condemn me: I care not. Nothing, I solemnly swear, shall alter this my determination. I know my own affairs; I defy and ignore the world, its counsel and censure."

Mr. Gwynne again lost his temper, and again swore outrageously at his son. Lady Elizabeth did not dare to interfere. Anarawd said nothing. A slight expression of indignant scorn played about his lips, as he quitted the study under a fresh volley of vituperative language.

"There, madam, you may thank yourself for this. There is no one to blame but yourself. Go and rejoice in your son's prospects. This is the fruit of allowing this attractive young lady to be so intimate here, and of your over-indulgence to your son when a child. You permitted him to imbibe all sorts

of primitive and independent ideas ; you know you did ! I hope you are aware of the mistake you have committed, as clearly as I am. Had I ruled him with a rod of iron from his cradle, he would not have been what he now is, a great fool. The day will come when he will regret and you will regret it, with the injudiciousness of your past conduct. Recollect, once cut off, he will be cut off irrevocably. It will be in vain then for you to come screaming his name in my ears. I shall forbid him the house, and not allow his name to be mentioned. It will be his loss, and his folly, not his father's ; so I shall give myself no concern. He may take his own course, for me, and curse me if he will—aye, he may curse me.”

“ Hush ! my dear sir, you don't know what you are saying ; you are so petulant—your only son !”

Mr. Gwynne walked about the room, and then drinking off a glass of strong brandy-and-water, resumed in a taunting tone :—

“Five hundred per annum! a meagre pittance for him: one, too, of his extravagant notions. He will be no better off than a pauper!”

“Liberal—don’t call him extravagant,” interrupted Lady Elizabeth.

“Well, well, it is all the same, with his notions. If Lewis treats his daughter no better than I do my son, an enviable position they will be in. That child—that pretty tenderling, so fitted to be a poor man’s wife—she will feel it more than he will, when she has to put her delicate hands to the wash-tub—who knows? she will be scarcely able to keep herself out of rags. If they do starve, I shall not help them; nor will I acknowledge my amiable son,—remember that. This, madam, is the precise state of affairs. You have to thank yourself for it all, and no one else. I will affirm that to the last hour of my life.”

“Do not speak with so much bitterness. He is our only son—do not break my heart

by letting me feel, through his unfortunate mother, that his father has disinherited him !” cried Lady Elizabeth, bursting into tears, and looking at him beseechingly. “They are both young, both of affectionate dispositions—so suited, so calculated to make each other happy. Think of your own youth, and have some regard for them. Do not be so hasty in your decision.”

“Folly — imbecility,” muttered Mr. Gwynne, in an irritated voice. Let me have no more of your tender, sympathetic feelings : I had enough, Heaven knows, of those the other day. You encourage him, you make him fly in the face of his own interest. To hear you express yourself in this way, is enough to provoke a saint. Go—for Heaven’s sake go, and leave me here in peace !”

“Let me prevail on you to listen to me for a few minutes. Be reasonable for once, my dear Herbert. They are young, as I said before; they are in no great hurry to get married. Captain Lewis’s consent has

to be obtained, and a thousand other things have to be considered. Why say anything at all about it for the present? Let it pass over till the time arrives. Gertrude has acknowledged to me, that without her father's consent the union can never take place. There is the chance of his not consenting; and in that case it will place my poor boy in another position. His trial will be hard enough then, without distracting him prematurely with threats and angry words."

Mr. Gwynne looked serious, and was silent; then suddenly he broke the pause—

"There may be truth in your suggestions. Now I reflect, Lewis perhaps will be as violently opposed to this union as myself; not on my account, but his own. He is selfish and jealous, and probably would not like to give up his child, to whom he is so devoted. From jealous feelings alone, he will compel his daughter to break off her engagement. It is as likely as not. About the best thing that could happen to them

both. Meanwhile I cannot do better than send my son from home. I had a letter from Gilford this morning. He is going upon the Continent, coaching a young party, and thinks it would be an admirable opportunity for Anarawd to join them. But, if I make this proposition, my dutiful son will in all likelihood oppose me, and you will oppose me, yet expect matters to run glibly between father and son ;—consistent !”

“ You do injustice to your son ; you don’t know him. He will not oppose your wishes when it does not directly violate his honour or his principles—you know that, Herbert ?”

“ Ah, yes, I am apt to be forgetful of his virtues. He is a paragon of perfection in your eyes. He never commits a fault, never does a wrong thing. He is a great fool, nevertheless.”

Mr. Gwynne here gave a cynical, satirical laugh, peculiar to himself. Drinking another glass of brandy-and-water, he threw himself into a chair and continued—

“Suppose, then, my dear madam, we again summon this virtuous youth, and put his dutifulness to the test.” He rose and rang the bell.

When Anarawd answered the summons, there was a change in his appearance; he was as pale as a spectre. His father at once noticed it, and for a minute there was an awkward pause.

“Sit down, my dear,” whispered Lady Elizabeth.

“I have not sent for you to resume our former subject,” broke in Mr. Gwynne abruptly, “but to make a proposition which will give you time to repent of your folly and restore you to reason. Here is a letter I have received from your old tutor; you will see what he says. While you are wasting your time here waiting for your commission, you cannot do better than join his party and see something of foreign parts. It is an opportunity that will not again

occur. I wish you to go. Will you oblige me, or will you again oppose me?"

In spite of all his efforts to appear calm, Anarawd could not disguise his feelings. The proposal was sudden and unlooked for. He hesitated, and seemed bewildered for a moment, and then gave a decided reply:

"Very well, sir, if it is your wish."

"Then you have not much time to lose. Gilford starts on the 18th. You must be off the day after to-morrow."

Neither father nor son seemed to have any inclination to enter into further conversation. Lady Elizabeth sat looking at her son with tears in her eyes, and was hardly able to walk when she rose to leave the room. Anarawd took her hand, and they left the study together.

"I am grieved for you, my dear Anarawd; let us go into the breakfast-room and have some private talk," whispered Lady Elizabeth.

“Not now, my dear mother, not now; I feel I would rather be alone.”

He kissed her affectionately, and wishing her good-night, mounted the great staircase and went to his own chamber.

Long after every light was extinguished in the house, his candle burnt dimly in the socket; but, dim or bright, it mattered little, for he could settle to no employment, neither could he sleep. Gertrude was in his thoughts, and her name was repeatedly upon his lips throughout the watches of the night, while the unconscious girl was wrapt in sweet slumber.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was twilight; and Anarawd Gwynne stood before the rich and fine old picture in the library at Clogwyn, motionless and silent. The subdued light, with a few borrowed reflections from the sunset sky, had stolen in through the casement, and was displaying this noble specimen of art to advantage. There seemed a fresh dreaminess, a new poetical romance, in every object and leaf to be found upon the canvas, proclaiming a wonderful production of an Italian master-hand, full of creative power.

Pre-occupied as the mind of Anarawd was, this effect riveted his attention. It was

actually subduing, imperceptibly, the restlessness and uneasiness of his mind. He did not stir until Gertrude's step bounded across the room, and he felt her fingers entwined with his own.

Without uttering a syllable, he conducted her to a sofa, and placed himself by her side.

It required but a single hasty glance at his face to rouse Gertrude's anxiety. Full of impulse, she pushed his wayy hair off his temples, and asked, with unaffected eagerness—

“What has happened, my dear Anarawd? I never remember to have seen you look so miserable, so wretched. Do speak, tell me?”

His prolonged silence increased her alarm; she dived into his eyes for an explanation. “Your father has insisted upon your breaking off our engagement, and has prohibited your coming to see me again. Is this the truth, the unvarnished truth? Do not keep

it from me. Anarawd ; I must have it, in whatever shape it exists," she urged.

"The truth, my darling Gertrude, often comes in an ill shape, and it wears that face now. I never before felt such a coward, so thoroughly unnerved, as I do at this moment. I have some bad news, and know not how to break it to you." He hesitated, and then continued—"My father has made a solemn resolution, that the instant you become my wife, he will shut me out of all his property—disinherit his only son, and close his doors against him. Bleddyn, the family estate, is all that I could lay claim to at his death ; but, not having sufficient means to keep up the place, that, too, would be as good as lost to me. And at the present moment I have no more than what my grandmother left me—a poor pittance, barely five hundred per annum, not sufficient to keep you as I would wish to keep my wife. No prospect in after-years would

then exist of your being the mistress of my old home, on which I had set my heart. Placed in this embarrassing position, can I dare to hope, Gertrude, that you will still cling to me, and be the wife of a poor man, disinherited from his family possessions, relegated from his home?" His lips quivered, and laying his hands across his eyes, he relapsed into silence.

His betrothed looked startled, and was greatly moved, yet spoke unhesitatingly.

"What! Anarawd, do you for one instant doubt my affection? Did I but possess my father's consent, were I only free, I would cling to you in misfortune, sickness, or distress. Do not wrong the woman who loves you. It is not the wealthy heir of Bleddyn I care about. No, no, it is Anarawd Gwynne for whom my heart throbs; and he has yet to learn how deeply a woman can love—how fearlessly and willingly she would share the destiny of the man who has her heart, through hardships and

poverty : with him, wants would cease to be wants ; without him, riches would be poverty. I confess this—nay, more, why should I conceal the truth from you, and live on deceiving myself? Dear as my father is to me, and unaccountable as it seems, by some invisible power you have so entwined yourself round my heart, that you have become dearer to me than he has ever been or can be.”

Anarawd drew her closer to him, and looked at her with intensity of feeling. There was nothing to be seen of her small, soft hands ; they were buried between his own. “ How welcome is this confession !—thank you for it, from the depths of my soul. Let the storms set in now, I shall weather them all—I am satisfied.”

“ No, you must not say satisfied : you misunderstand me ; this is not now the question. To be constant to you, would injure you. I could not see you disinherited for my sake, nor witness the mortification which you

would suffer from your father's unnatural conduct. It would be sowing seeds of perpetual disunion between you and your parents. It would be giving you joy, and snatching it from you. This must not be ; we shall have to wear upon our hearts the panoply of duty, and sever our engagement. Reason demands it, dear Anarawd : however great the sacrifice, we ought to obey ; we must obey."

"No, my darling ; duty is not so imperious as to demand any such sacrifice. What recompense, either, should we gain by it ? Nothing whatever. Without you, my wealth would be the bane of my existence. Look at me, Gertrude : I could bear any trial but losing you ; with your confession engraven on my heart, I will try and rise in the army. I have interest ; I will work, do anything—serve with Jacob's patience for seven years, rather than lose my prize—a prize a hundred times the value of the property I forfeit. Don't look so sorrowful : now I feel the re-

action of happiness ; certain of your love, I am prepared to combat all things.”

“ Why so hopeful ? Though you have my heart, I may never be your wife, never ! The impenetrable future, I have a foreshadowing, is darkened for us. Even before my father’s return home, all things are going against us. Why have I been heedless of fore-warnings ? Why did I permit you to gain my affections, when I felt I was doing wrong ? It was criminal to yield to what I knew would be harmful to both. Reflect now upon our present position, and you must acknowledge that it would have been better for us both had we never met. Would ! oh, Anarawd, would that—”

“ Gertrude ”—he grasped her hand resolutely—“ you shall not speak in this wild way ; you promised me you never would again. You know how it pains me. We cannot pretend to dive into the future. There may be more blessings than sorrows in store for us. Do be hopeful : we should

always be ready to face the storms of life, and ride them down with a stout heart. The greater inability we feel to keep up our courage, the more we must seek for strength to discipline our hearts and our minds, to conquer such weaknesses; for, remember, these trials do not emanate from man alone, but from our Creator, who wills his own designs, and makes man the instrument. If we but place confidence in Him, He will bless us in his own good time; rest assured of that."

"I cannot see and feel as you do; I am no optimist, but a miserable, erring being!" interjected Gertrude, giving way to passionate grief.

There was a troubled pause. Anarawd felt her small fingers tightening over his, and the throb of her heart was audible. He struggled against his feelings.

"I would say a thousand things to comfort you. Be a brave girl, and be not cast down at the first blow. Do, my darling,

for your own sake as well as mine, endeavour to keep up your fortitude. You will not have me long to talk to you : promise me you will."

Gertrude gave a start, and lifted up her sorrowful eyes to his. "You are going from home, then—going to leave me? I felt it would end thus, and thus we are punished."

"To oblige my father, I have consented to go abroad with my *ci-devant* tutor, old Gilford; but I shall not be long away."

"This is cruel news!"

"It cannot be avoided; we must part sometimes, you know. When I get my commission, it will be a longer separation than this." He lowered his voice. "Gertrude, we are not the only ones who will feel the separation: my poor mother! she is broken-hearted at this arrangement. Will you go often to see her, and cheer her in my absence?" Tears started to his eyes. "Say you will oblige me."

"It will be a hard task, when I shall want

cheer myself. How wretched and lonely we shall be without you !”

“ The time will soon glide by, and we must often write to each other. After all, to get knocked about in the world will do me good : I have been leading a sad idle life of late. You have frequently remarked, you like to see men manly. How I have degenerated from your standard ! Yet how is it, Gertrude, you have not discovered my falling off ?”

“ Because there is no degeneracy : you only fancy so.”

“ What ! you are blind to my faults ! Now it is my turn for retaliation. I shall have to get you a pair of spectacles, when you will be alarmed at the host of errors which will appear.”

“ Oh ! don't laugh, don't talk lightly ; it is a mockery when we are so unhappy. I am content to see you as you are ; I would rather there was not the slightest change in you. Those who live much in the great

world generally become selfish, cold-hearted, and conventional : you have said so yourself. Do not suppose, then, you will gain any advantage in my eyes : certainly not. How earnestly I wish you were not going ! We have been so happy ; the brightness of those days will never come again. Must you—are you obliged to go ?”

“ Yes : my sentence is passed.”

She looked up tenderly in his face. “ See how inconsistent I am. A little while since, I was for severing our engagement ; now, I am for holding you fast, and cannot reconcile myself to part with you, even for a short time. Why have you made me care so deeply for you ? You are to blame.”

“ No ; that I call cowardly, to impute the blame to me. We had better not attempt an investigation. You forget what a little loadstone you are yourself—how impossible it was, with all my foregoing determination, to shun your sex—I could not resist you. But we won't talk about it now ; rather let

me tell you, with your hand upon my heart, that notwithstanding this cruel rupture with my father, your declaration has made me happier than before ; for I have still greater confidence in your love.”

Eye rested upon eye : there was a silence on both sides for a few minutes ; but to them it was not a pause—they could read each other’s heart without the aid of language. The eloquence of the eye is as forcible and faithful as the language of the lips : in the eye of Anarawd Gwynne there was something peculiar—it was as if his soul dwelt in them.

“ And when am I to lose you ? ” Gertrude at length inquired, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, half shrinking from the answer.

“ To-morrow.”

The colour forsook her cheeks and lips, as she repeated, “ To-morrow ! so soon ! ”

When the truth burst upon her mind, she could no longer control her agitation. Starting up, she moved hastily towards the

open window, concealing her face from her companion, who also rose and followed her.

“To part in this way is doubly distressing. Gertrude, dearest, keep up your heart; show your own real character—that you are no ordinary person. Let us look forward cheerfully to a happy meeting.”

“When we part, we don’t know when we shall meet. This plan for your joining Mr. Gilford may only be a *ruse* of your father to keep us apart, to wean us from each other. And how shall I be able to cheer your mother during your absence, with the sad conviction that I am the sole cause of her distress? Instead of giving me a welcome, my presence will cause her pain. Do not ask me to be reconciled.” Tears were streaming from her eyes, and her whole frame shook with emotion.

Anarawd drew her away from the window, and kissed her repeatedly. There was a long interval of silence again. At length

it was broken by his appealing to Gertrude's feelings and judgment. So cogent and full of pathos was his eloquence, that if it had not the desired effect of soothing the unhappy girl, it restored her to something like reason and self-possession.

The clock struck twelve as Anarawd Gwynne passed out through the gates of Clogwyn. It was a dreary night. The wind howled among the trees, and scattered the boughs and leaves in the air, as if it had been the winter solstice, instead of summertime. Dreary and cheerless as the prospect opened upon him, it was not so dreary as his own disturbed spirit. Here let the curtain be dropped.

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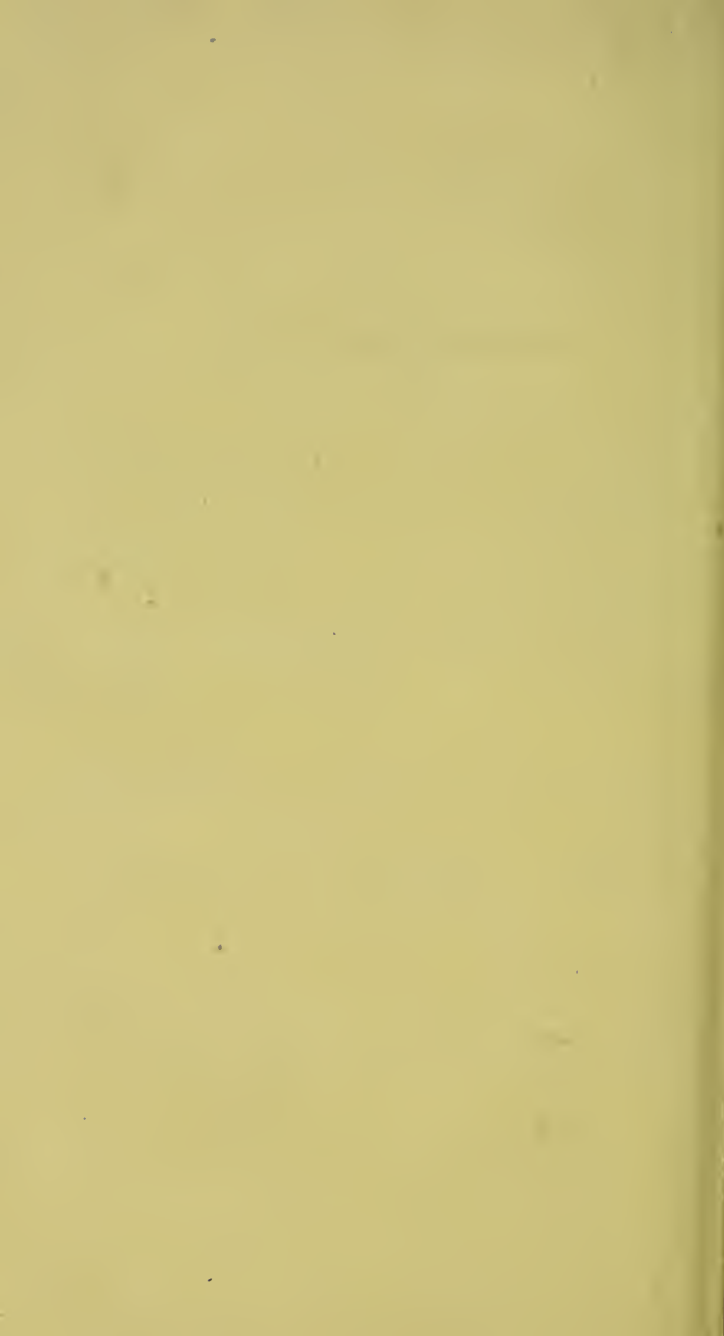
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